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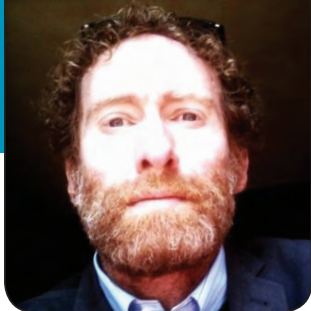
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EVERY PITCHER TELLS A STORY

Welcome to our third annual Global Pitch Guide, designed to illuminate the needs of commissioning editors and programming execs from around the world, and to offer helpful tips on the best ways to approach said individuals when pitching your non-fiction projects (public washrooms, incidentally, are a no-no).

As we've done for the past two editions, the *realscreen* editorial staff has once again reached out to scads of commissioners and distilled their collected wisdom in the following pages, and you'll also find more profiles at **www.realscreen.com**. We've added a couple of tweaks to our coverage this year – important details such as contact info, target demo and whether or not the network takes unsolicited pitches have been broken out as bullet points in each profile for your convenience, and we've also asked our subjects to weigh in on how to make your sizzle reels, or taster tapes, tastier.

While the shopping lists vary from region to region and from network to network, there are certainly threads that run throughout the commentary within. You'll see several execs touting the value of "authenticity," which is reassuring, considering that we're discussing non-fiction programming. You'll also find the phrase "larger than life characters" popping up repeatedly in these profiles, particularly from North American networks.

Of course, you'll also see much mention of the importance of great storytelling, both in the project itself and in the pitch. Clarity, focus, authority and passion go a long way towards getting a project on screen, and in telling the story itself.

Thus, with all of that in mind, please read on to find out in more detail who wants what, and how they want it. It's said that knowledge is power, so it's our hope that the nuggets contained herein will inspire some powerful pitches in the months ahead.

Cheers,
Barry Walsh
Editor
realscreen

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**A&E**

ELAINE FRONTAIN BRYANT

SVP, ALTERNATIVE & NON-FICTION
PROGRAMMING

CONTACT:

Send submissions to manager of development
Laurie Sharpe: laurie.sharpe@aenetworks.com.
She'll require a signed release.

TARGET AUDIENCE/DEMO:

Sweet spot is 25-39, with a 50-50 split
between male and female.

PAY RANGE:

"We are truly competitive when it comes to series
commission costs, and each show is different."

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"The people that come to our shows appreciate real life series that are entertaining at their core, but that are relatable too," says Frontain Bryant, who points towards family relationships, workplace relationships and friendships as subject matter that clicks for the net. However, these stories are told via "larger than life characters... characters people want to hang out with," as seen in recent hit *Duck Dynasty*.

Series tend to be half-hours but A&E will look at hour-long series as well. "It's truly about finding the best fit for the show," she says.

PITCHING 'DON'T'S':

"Authenticity" is the key element to A&E non-fiction programming, says Frontain Bryant, so with that in mind, producers should make sure they have their, ahem, ducks in a row when it comes to pitching talent to the net.

"We really don't like it when folks pitch us a world they don't have access to," she says. "And it's always preferable if you are pitching characters to have them on tape. To that end, I find pitch meetings are better without the talent in the room – the producers and execs can have a more realistic talk about the show that isn't hampered by worrying about hurting talent's feelings."

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

"When a sizzle reel establishes characters, their relationships to each other, the unique world they inhabit, and frankly even how [the] story could be approached, it's a home run." **BW**

“We really don’t like it when folks pitch us a world they don’t have access to.”

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**TARGET DEMO:**

Adults 25-54, dual male and female.

CONTACT:

Discovery Producer's Portal at
<http://producers.discovery.com>.

“We try to respect animals and the world we share with them.”

ANIMAL PLANET**ANDY WEISSBERG**

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMMING AND SCHEDULING

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

What works best for the Discovery Communications net are character-based shows with larger-than-life characters who are interesting and unusual, such as *River Monsters'* Jeremy Wade, *Call of the Wildman's* Ernie Brown Jr., and *Whale Wars'* Sea Shepherds. Characters also need to be relatable and evoke credibility in their worlds, since they serve as the audience's entry point.

As for the tone of the programming, Weissberg says: "Animal Planet tries to respect animals and the world we share with them, as we explore the connection between human and animals."

HOW TO PITCH:

There's no absolute preferred method of pitching to Animal Planet, since in-person meetings, phone calls and emailed pitches are all acceptable. They are open to seeing pitches early in the process, via one-pagers or Skype interviews, or a short outline and a YouTube clip. For talent-based pitches, tape is necessary.

After submitting ideas to the Discovery Producer's Portal, follow up by sending materials to the network's development assistant, Karl Rodulfo, via email at Karl_Rodulfo@Discovery.com.

PITCHING DON'TS:

Don't pitch talent that you haven't contacted or already signed to a holding deal.

Don't self-censor when pitching Animal Planet, Weissberg advises, and send pitches that explore "animal" and/or "planet" elements. Also, try to consider "man versus nature" and "man versus the elements" themes.

WHAT IT PAYS:

Animal Planet's per-hour costs generally range from US\$250,000 to \$400,000 but can go as high as \$800,000 for big ideas. Orders are typically six to 10 hours for a first season series, and with very successful series, the order may increase to 20 hours.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

Weissberg says Animal Planet wants to see the talent interacting. It's also more advantageous if the sizzle reel can hint about the stories viewers would see in the series.

"Our executives thoroughly read treatments, and while a strong scene can pique our interest, it's better if we see tape that can speak to narrative arcs," he says.

As for music, Weissberg recommends producers reconsider using The Black Keys in sizzles. "We love that duo, but we have heard 'Gold on the Ceiling' and 'Tighten Up' countless times!" **KA**



BBC AMERICA

RACHEL SMITH

VP, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Smith says the audience for BBC America, which began its push into original programming last year, is upscale, highly educated and comprised of early adopters. "Our viewers have passports and know how to use them," she quips.

"The best word to describe the tone we're looking for is 'irreverent,'" she adds. "When you think of the programs and talent that do best on the network – the guys from *Top Gear*, Gordon Ramsay, Graham Norton – they all have a fun and almost mischievous tone that our viewers really respond to. Think of your cheeky British friends who you'd want to meet at the pub."

Indeed, Smith says that the net's Brit-ness is its unique angle. "We offer our viewers access to a world where they can explore the intricacies of British culture, and also see how much the American cultural conversation has British influence at every turn," she says. To that end, Smith says combining a forward-thinking, trendsetting idea with a "British twist" could turn up a winner for the network.

"There are a variety of ways to approach this – from casting a mix of British and American talent, putting a British twist on familiar genres, exploring the culture clash or asking the question, 'Who does it better, the UK or the U.S.?'"

As for volumes, BBC America is looking for longer-running, returnable series. "Talent should be able to come back season after season so that we can build a new stable of familiar faces for our brand," Smith says. While the network commissions mostly hours, it's open to half-hours.

HOW TO PITCH:

Agents and producers can send pitches to Smith via the email address above, or to SVP of programming Richard De Croce (richard.decroce@bbc.com) or senior manager of unscripted programming Michelle Pilson (michelle.pilson@bbc.com). One-pagers and links to tape are the preferred submission materials for Smith and team, "but if you have an idea you want to run by us quickly, we're always happy to get back to you on a logline." Smith also advises that you watch the net to get a feel for its "cheeky and irreverent" personality.

Also, as the network takes a "talent first" approach, "even if you don't have a star attached to the pitch just yet, please come with some talent ideas." **BW**

CONTACT:

rachel.smith@bbc.com

TARGET AUDIENCE/DEMO:

"We tend to have a bit of a male skew with a median age in the low 40s."

“Our viewers have passports and know how to use them.”

**BRAVO****ELI LEHRER**

VP DEVELOPMENT, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING

TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

Yes, but proper paperwork and release forms need to be signed. Contact the submissions department directly to get and sign the release via 818.777.6879; submissions@nbcuni.com.

SERIES VOLUMES:

Usually, Bravo orders six or eight one-hour episodes for a first season show, "with the orders typically going up in subsequent seasons."

“Our viewers respond to new and different ideas and we do too.”

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"In terms of what we look for in a specific pitch, first and foremost it's compelling tape," offers Lehrer. "So much of what we do on Bravo is character-driven that it's unusual for us to get excited about a project if we can't see the character, or characters, driving the show." Bringing the talent in can be a bit of a "crapshoot," he advises, and for formatted series, "one-pagers and treatments are important as well and can, at times, better convey the concept than a rushed piece of tape."

Over the past year the NBCU cable net has aired some half-hour series, and Lehrer says orders for those tend to be a bit larger, but "our major focus is still one-hours."

As for tone and subject matter, Lehrer says, "We like our shows to be built around people who are both at the top of their game – whether it's in real estate, matchmaking, styling or cooking – and truly willing to give our viewers an intimate look at what makes them, and their businesses, tick." But he also advises that producers trying to unlock the key to what the network wants should flip the question, and consider instead what it doesn't want.

"For instance, we aren't looking for projects that are primarily male-appealing (though we do respond to shows that appeal to men or promote co-viewing), spaces we've explored in the past, or those that are too derivative of shows we currently have on our air," he offers. "Our viewers respond to new and different ideas and we do too."

Think of the network's audience as divided into two core groups: "Will and Gracers" (affluent, cosmopolitan, educated, and mostly single) and "PTA Trendsetters" (also affluent and engaged with pop culture but more suburban, perhaps mothers).

HOW TO MAKE A KILLER SIZZLE:

"The best sizzles accomplish three things," says Lehrer. "First, they give our development team an accurate sense of the characters – their day-to-day, their homes, etc. – and the world they inhabit. Second, killer sizzles tell us, at least in some way, how the show would look and progress in series. They have to leave us wanting more. Finally, the perfect sizzles show that you are a viable partner to execute the idea on the tape." **BW**

**CMT****JAYSON DINSMORE**

EVP OF DEVELOPMENT

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

The country music and related-lifestyle network's top reality shows include fish-out-of-water series *My Big Redneck Vacation*, the rags-to-riches *Bayou Billionaires*, music franchise *CMT Crossroads* and the perennially popular *CMT Music Awards*.

The majority of its pitches come from agents or producers that have existing relationships with the network, so smaller producers are encouraged to partner with larger ones. If a show is character-based, a reel will work but paper pitches will be accepted in the case of heavily formatted shows.

"Our audience is not interested in heavy-handed producing or overly dramatic storylines," says Dinsmore. "Most of CMT's programming derives from a very specific world view – a passion for having a hell of a good time. We look for strong characters. People who are inherently funny, a bit loud and a bit crazy, but who also have real heart and humor in the way they interact with each other. Our audience wants to laugh, or cry from laughing so hard."

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

"The best reels have a specific point of view, are cleverly edited, not too long, and feature characters that demand our attention," he says. "If done well, a reel will elicit an emotional response; be it humor, nostalgia or excitement for a project." **KR**

CONTACT INFO:

Jayson.dinsmore@cmt.com.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

50-50 male/female with an average age hovering in the late 30s and early 40s.

**DESTINATION AMERICA****MARC ETKIND**

SVP OF CONTENT STRATEGY

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

The recently launched Destination America is looking for all things American in genres including food, travel, home, adventure, and natural history. "We want to celebrate the people, places, and stories of the United States, emblazoned with the grit and tenacity, honesty and work ethic, humor, adventurousness, and the component of nostalgia that characterize our nation," says Etkind.

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitches have the best chance with the Discovery Communications net if they are clear and concise in terms of an overall treatment and a sample act-by-act breakdown, which will give Etkind and team an idea of how you see your concept translating into a television show. However, remember that geography is important. "You may have a hard time convincing us that your show set in Europe is right for Destination America.

"Our budgets are on the lower end of the spectrum, but we are committed to quality programming and will work with you to land on a budget that works for all parties," Etkind adds. "We're open to coproductions, and can often allow companies to retain international rights." **KA**

TARGET AUDIENCE:

"All-Americans," skews slightly male, average age is in the 40s

CONTACT:

Discovery's Producer's Portal,
<http://producers.discovery.com>.



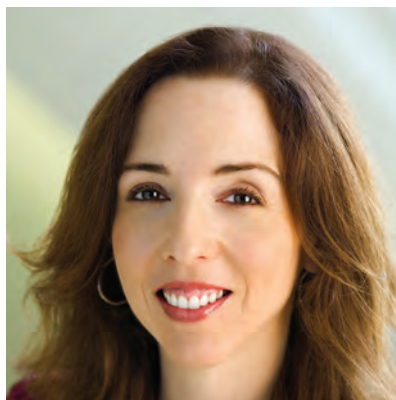
DISCOVERY CHANNEL

SIMON ANDRAE

SVP, DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION,
WEST COAST

DOLORES GAVIN

SVP, DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION,
EAST COAST



CONTACT:

For East Coast, Matt Kelly (Matthew_kelly@discovery.com) and Mike Sorensen (Michael_Sorensen@discovery.com).

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

"Tape is preferred; a treatment is a must."

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

With Discovery's audience clocking in at about 65% male, and with an average age of 41, Gavin and Andrae say the tone of the network ranges from "guys doing tough jobs to deep science mysteries." Character-driven series are tops on the shopping list, with the development execs pointing to "great characters with personal stakes in the outcome, great back-story and enough action to drive the storyline" as fundamental elements needed for Discovery programming. Recent breakout hits from the net have included *Gold Rush*, *Moonshiners*, *Bering Sea Gold* and *Sons of Guns*. The team is also interested in exploring "organic formats."

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitches don't have to come through an agent or a lawyer, but they do have to be registered on Discovery's producer's portal, at **producers.discovery.com**. And while tape is not essential, "it really helps."

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

Gavin and Andrae offer plenty of tips on the sizzle reel front. "Great sizzles tell us what the show is," they say. "They have two or three main story beats and primarily showcase the talent and set up the world that they inhabit. You should be able to tell your story without narration, with either slates or sound bites, and they should be no longer than five minutes." **BW**



FOOD NETWORK/ COOKING CHANNEL

BRIAN LANDO

SVP, DEVELOPMENT, FOOD NETWORK
AND COOKING CHANNEL



JENNIFER QUANTON

VP, PROGRAMMING, FOOD NETWORK
AND COOKING CHANNEL

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

The Food Network's audience is relatively upscale, 60/40 female in primetime and 70/30 female on the weekend mornings. Cooking Channel's demo is the same but skews slightly more male during primetime by virtue of being a digital channel.

Competition shows and formatted reality such as *Chopped*, *Iron Chef America*, *Restaurant Stakeout* and *Mystery Diners* are working well for Food, which tends to have deeper pockets than its sister channel.

Execs are looking to try out more docusoaps and travel series and, more broadly, are interested in primetime programming that attracts a dual audience and personality-led shows for the weekend. "Shows about people who cook versus 'cooking shows,'" says Lando.

Cooking Channel, meanwhile, is looking for talent-led programming with specific points of view. "Our viewers are looking for an experience, so getting talent out of the kitchen is important," says Quainton. "We haven't yet cracked the code on a drink program that is successful with our food audience."

HOW TO PITCH:

A character tape or sizzle is a must except in the case of a format. With sizzles, they're looking for high production values, conciseness and energy.

"Entertainment and a respect for food needs to be at the core of our programming," says Lando. "Content with an element of redemption and resolution is what best serves our primetime programming. Viewers also come to us looking for aspirational content. Segments from morning shows or talent tapes that feature cursing and yelling for drama's sake are not going to likely land a project." **KR**

CONTACT INFO:

Peipei Zhang, development coordinator:
pzhang@foodnetwork.com.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

No.



TAPE OR TREATMENT?:

"Producers can send us one-liners to gauge interest, but if we're really going to move on something, we have to see some tape."

CONTACT:

All programmers at History develop and oversee series and specials. Thus, Hoogstra says, "We encourage producers to have multiple points of contact."

“Our team lives and breathes this brand; we know it when we see it.”

HISTORY

DIRK HOOGSTRA

SVP, PROGRAMMING & DEVELOPMENT

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"For our guys, authenticity is key," says Hoogstra. "They want to know that the characters they're watching are the real deal. It's what unites our hit series, *Pawn Stars*, *American Pickers*, *Swamp People*, *Ax Men*, *Top Gear*... our viewers are not only entertained by these characters, they're getting insight and information from them." Beyond authenticity, however, Hoogstra likes to keep an open mind when it comes to evaluating pitches.

"Since I started working with Nancy Dubuc in 2007, she's been clear that it doesn't make sense to have a filter," he says. "Our team lives and breathes this brand, [so] we know it when we see it."

WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE PITCH:

Don't be rigid, but rather, try to embrace a flexible approach to the process, offers Hoogstra.

"We try to have a fluid and creative development process," he says. "We know what our viewers are looking for and we appreciate when producers work with us as creative partners. It's tough when a producer comes in just looking for a yes or no on something."

WHAT HE PAYS:

For History, the creative defines the budget. "I don't believe in market price for shows," maintains Hoogstra. "I want to know what it's going to cost to create the show we believe will work the best for History."

REGARDING SIZZLE REELS:

"A great sizzle showcases the characters and gives us a clear reason why viewers would make an appointment to watch this show." **BW**



LIFETIME NETWORKS

GENA MCCARTHY

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, REALITY & ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

McCarthy and team are on the hunt for "best-in-class characters in all genres; untapped worlds; and fresh, differentiated formats that provide an entertaining escape for women, while not kicking men out of the room," she says. "We've had luck with strong, credible, 'loud' characters and docusoaps," she adds, pointing to the success of *Dance Moms* and its ensemble cast, "dominated" by Abby Lee Miller. "And we would love to find strong, repeatable, stand-alone formats."

She sums up her checklist like so: "Great characters, unexpected stories, wonderful storytelling."

HOW TO PITCH:

McCarthy advises that producers looking to make inroads with Lifetime should find an "advocate" on her team and work the idea through him or her. "It could be any of our VPs, directors or managers – from Noah Pollack and David Hillman in the Los Angeles office; to Kim Chessler, Abigail Harvey or Colleen Conway in the New York office," she offers.

But when you do get an audience, be sure to walk in with an open mind and don't censor your ideas.

"Don't assume you know what Lifetime wants or needs," she cautions. "And by that, I mean don't edit your favorite pitches that you're most excited about because you think a 'women's network' would never be interested in something that isn't soft and earnest and safe. Pitch us your best concepts, and let us be the editorial judges."

HOW TO HEAT UP YOUR SIZZLE:

"Entertain me. Either make me laugh, or make me cry, or shock me by showing me something I've never seen before. But you need to get a strong reaction out of the people you're pitching – there's nothing worse than a room filled with bored programmers who feel blasé about your product." **BW**

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

"We love to engage in informal conversations with producers – loglines, phone calls, treatments or tape. All is welcome."

TARGET DEMO:

Female skewing, with core demos being adults 25-54 and women 25-54.

SERIES VOLUMES:

Minimum series orders tend to be six or eight hour pick-ups.

“Great characters, unexpected stories, wonderful storytelling.”

**MTV****CHRIS LINN**HEAD OF PRODUCTION AND EVP,
PROGRAMMING**TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:**

No.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

A two-page outline is standard. Tape is not necessary but helpful if illustrating a format show with a specific type of cast or character.

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

MTV aims for a broad 12-34 audience with a core target of females 18-24. Male-skewing shows are welcome as long as they don't exclude the female demo.

WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:

MTV looks for programming across all genres – reality, scripted, music and animation – with emotional stakes and characters in “relatable, yet amplified situations.” The motto is “‘new,’ not ‘next’” so anything that feels derivative of what’s already on the air – namely “the next version of *Jersey Shore*” – is going to get a pass.

Linn and his team are open to discuss pitches in the early stages of development in order to guide the process and best meet the network’s dynamic programming needs.

“Tonally, our audience is looking to be surprised, informed and entertained,” says Linn. “While they like us to address substantive issues that impact their lives, the overall experience should feel like a fun ride.”

HOW TO PITCH:

A good pitch will clearly define the concept, reflect a producer’s professional standards and show an understanding of the millennial audience and how they conduct their lives. Sizzle reels should be no longer than three-to-five minutes, especially if the pitch is in person. Links to longer formats can be emailed after the initial pitch when appropriate.

“Authenticity is key,” he maintains. “It is important to challenge formula and avoid conceits that feel phony or fake.” **KR**

“Our audience is looking to be surprised, informed and entertained.”



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

ALAN EYRES

SVP, PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENT

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

LA-based Eyres says that NGC is expanding its reach when it comes to its approach to factual content. "We are growing quickly in two areas – gritty character-driven programming such as *Wicked Tuna*, and 'American Outlier' programming that presents unique worlds, cultures and people that are surprisingly relatable, such as our number one series *Doomsday Preppers*, *American Colony: Meet the Hutterites* and *Amish: Out of Order*," he offers. It's all part of a move towards what he calls "more contemporary storytelling methods and focusing on captivating and recurring characters in a dramatic style.

"Non-fiction for us covers a wide spectrum," he says. "We are making bigger, bolder bets on new programming and balancing authenticity with entertainment for a primarily male audience."

HOW TO PITCH:

Producers should check the global "Ideas" website (URL to the left) dedicated to pitches. Also, Eyres says interested parties should take note that NGC now has development reps in New York, LA, Washington DC and London, "so we are situated as a global team ready to hear any pitch."

He adds that loglines are "a great place to start and gauge interest," and that tape should accompany any pitch reliant on characters.

"We don't want price point to be a deterrent on pitches – we will look at anything, and our programming slate is varied from US\$150,000-\$400,000 an hour," he adds.

As for what not to do, Eyres advises that producers keep an open mind when approaching NGC. "Don't predetermine what won't work for us," he says. "We want to look at a breadth and depth of fresh programming ideas from the most creative producers out there."

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

"The tape doesn't need to be expensive, but it needs to offer us fresh original worlds and give a clear insight into the characters." **BW**

WEBSITE:

www.ngcideas.com

SERIES VOLUMES:

"We order hours and half-hours from one-16. Six- to eight hour orders are most common."

TARGET DEMO:

60% male, "so male-skewing programs are a definite focus for us."

“We are making bigger, bolder bets on new programming.”



NAT GEO WILD

JANET HAN VISSERING

SVP, DEVELOPMENT

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"Our shows are first and foremost entertaining," says Han Vissering about National Geographic Channel's sister net. "We also try and keep a positive and uplifting message." Successful series have included the anthology series *World's Deadliest* and *World's Weirdest*; *Caught in the Act*; *The Incredible Dr. Pol*; *Fish Tank Kings*; and *The Dog Whisperer*. Han Vissering says blue chip history specials also "continue to rate and define our network."

The pricing range for commissions starts in the US\$200,000 per hour range "and goes up from there," she says, with series orders tackling a minimum of six episodes. The net airs hours and half-hours.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Tape is a must for any talent or host-related pitch. A one-pager "with enough details to set your project apart" suffices otherwise.

CONTACT:

Development coordinator Joseph Bersack at jbersack@natgeotv.com.

TARGET DEMO:

Male, 25-55 years old. "It's really important that we deliver shows that appeal to this demo."

PITCHING DON'TS:

Although the network is known as the more wildlife-oriented of the Nat Geo Channel family, Han Vissering says that while producers should definitely be familiar with what it airs, they shouldn't come to the pitching table with preconceived notions. She maintains that it's a "big no-no when producers 'pre-edit' or assume what won't work for us because we carry the National Geographic brand.

"Let us make that editorial decision on what we can or can't air," she advises. "Bring us everything."

SIZZLE TIPS:

"Make it concise, exciting, and definitely must see television," she counsels. "If you can't master this in the sizzle, the show won't happen." **BW**

“We try and keep a positive and uplifting message.”



OXYGEN

CORI ABRAHAM

SVP, DEVELOPMENT

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Tape for docuseries.

TARGET DEMO:

25-35 years old, female.

BUDGETS:

Can start in the US\$300,000 range, with a higher end of upwards of \$500,000.

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

The NBCUniversal cable network with the tagline of 'Live out loud' wants formatted series, docusoaps with large story arcs, and characters that are big, bold and unapologetic. The net aims to capture a female audience experiencing different stages within the 25-35 age span – transitional major life moments such as marriage, starting a family and beginning a career.

A recent example of what's worked for Oxygen is *The Glee Project*, a reality competition show created by *Glee*'s Ryan Murphy. "We were able to take a very popular show in *Glee* and figure out what the reality version of that is, which was unique and it felt like you hadn't seen it before," says Abraham.

She tends to order six to eight hours for a freshman series.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

Sizzles can be as brief as a minute and a half to three minutes to get your point across.

"It's great to see someone on camera being themselves in their own environment and it's probably a better way to assess whether they're going to be a good character for television than [having] them in an executive's office, feeling slightly nervous around a conference room table," she says. Tape doesn't have to be great quality, as they've bought shows based on Skype footage. **KA**



PBS 'POV'

SIMON KILMURRY

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

Now in its 25th year, the PBS independent documentary strand programs around 14 to 16 documentaries a year that use a variety of styles – from personal essays and cinéma vérité to experimental and animation – to engage viewers around an issue through a strongly authored and character-driven approach.

Its basic license fee is US\$30,000 per hour or \$45,000 per feature acquisition. Copro funding ranges from \$30,000-\$70,000 with a high mark of \$150,000. Run times are 51:25 and 81:25 minutes and varying lengths in between. It also accepts short films.

Hopeful filmmakers are advised to log on to www.pbs.org/pov and peruse the strand's back catalog of more than 365 films to get a feel for programmers' tastes. "Always have some scenes for us to take a look at," says EP Simon Kilmurry. "Browse our submission guidelines and know that we cannot get involved at the development stage."

CONTACT INFO:

Submit to the 'POV' Call for Entries (deadline is annually at the end of June) via www.pbs.org/pov/filmmakers. Out-of-cycle submissions should be sent to Andrew Catauro, coordinating producer at: 20 Jay Street, Suite 940 Brooklyn, NY 11201 or via acatauro@pov.org. Always include a DVD or link to scenes and a very brief description. **KR**

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Tape.

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

The PBS footprint covers 115 million TV households and POV reaches roughly 97% of those viewers.



SCIENCE

DEBBIE MYERS

GENERAL MANAGER

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"Our audience wants smart, lean-forward entertainment," says Myers of the Discovery net's programming mandate. "We are looking for something different and unique. Science loves programming where we are leading the genre or style of storytelling that is completely different from our competitors."

She's most interested in "something that investigates further the heart of the unknown or the mysteries of what is around us. We also appreciate having a sense of humor!" She's looking for programs that are "personal to the viewer and, most of all, passionate in their storytelling."

HOW TO PITCH:

Contact her development team – Brad Kohlenstein, Brian Lavin and Julia Wagman – with an email detailing your credentials if you've not worked with them before, a logline, and casting ideas.

SIZZLE TIPS:

Tell the story "in about three minutes or less," says Myers. "Also, don't bury the lead. What is the logline of your project? We want to understand in a sentence or two what that key concept is about." As for casting, Skype can work as well as a talent reel. **BW**

TARGET DEMO:

25-54, more male than female.

PITCHING "DON'TS":

Stay away from "copycat formats from other networks" and "'old-fashioned' science shows."



SPIKE

CHRIS RANTAMAKI

VICE PRESIDENT OF ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"Concepts that work best for us have big characters, clear stakes, lots of conflict and a strong hook that keeps the audience glued all the way to the end," says Rantamaki.

Shows currently working well for the Viacom net include the tattoo competition series, *Ink Master*, which is coming back for another season, *Auction Hunters*, and *Bar Rescue*.

HOW TO PITCH:

Spike prefers producers to go through agents or attorneys to pitch them. Rantamaki and team also attend the Realscreen Summit and Realscreen West, and WestDoc.

PITCHING DON'T'S:

Don't bring leftovers. "Bring your ideas to us first because we move quickly," he cautions. "We have a focused, agile team and it's not uncommon to go from pitch to air in a matter of months."

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

Sizzles should clearly communicate the format of the show and allow the Spike execs to see the chemistry and range of the characters. **KA**

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Men, co-viewing.

TAPE OR TREATMENT:

Both.



STYLE NETWORK

SARAH WEIDMAN

SVP, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING & DEVELOPMENT

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

The NBCU cable network programs for a handful of lifestyle sub-genres – fashion, beauty, celeb style, stylish living (home, design, entertaining, food, travel) and “aspirational” lifestyle. Weidman says she’s looking to develop both docuseries and formatted programming across those categories.

Shows that fit the bill include *Jerseylicious*, *Big Rich Texas* and an upcoming docuseries featuring fashion designer Betsey Johnson, as well as programs featuring strong women in a positive light. Audiences respond to loud, over-the-top characters that are comfortable with their own style.

HOW TO PITCH:

Weidman says: “Be prepared to explain what elements of the format distinguish your idea from similar formats already in the marketplace.” Her development team handles incoming pitches.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

Have a clear POV and showcase a unique editing style in the clip, prove the talent is a “one-of-a-kind, must-have” character, and tease Weidman and team enough to leave them wanting more. **KA**

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Women 18-49 with a sweet spot of 18-34.

TREATMENT OR TAPE:

Tape if it's a docuseries based on talent.



SUNDANCE CHANNEL

MARCO BRESAZ

VP, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENT

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

The key elements of Sundance's creative filter include: The Pursuit of Living a True Life, Emotional Immersion, Authenticity and Social Conversation. “By ‘Social Conversation,’ we mean doing shows that are truly about something, shows that tap into larger issues we’re all concerned with in an accessible and entertaining way,” says Bresaz.

“Our audience is looking for television that engages and adds value to their lives,” he adds. “They want to watch television that respects their intelligence while entertaining them.”

HOW TO PITCH:

Credited producers and/or their agents can contact Alex Schwarm, coordinator, original programming and development, via Alex.Schwarm@sundancechannel.com. “Each project is different, but we do prefer one sheets and tape,” says Bresaz. “Tape is especially helpful for character-based projects.”

THE RIGHT SIZZLE FOR SUNDANCE:

“A great sizzle has great characters, takes you into a unique world or experience, and tells an interesting story while hitting the key points of our filter,” he says. “A great sizzle stands out by surprising and being different than so much of the more predictable projects that come through our door.” **BW**

TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

No.

TARGET DEMO:

Adults 35-44, with a slight female skew.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

**SYFY****TIM KRUBSACK**

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING

TREATMENT OR TAPE:

"Paper is required for every project submitted, including a fully formulated breakdown and examples when appropriate. Tape is a must for character-driven projects."

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

Skews 50-50 male-female, targets 18-49 demo.

TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

No.

“We’ve seen every ghost hunting group under the sun.”

WHAT HE’S LOOKING FOR:

"We are constantly looking for programming that helps our audience believe the unbelievable," says Krubsack. Innovative paranormal shows featuring characters that are skeptical, such as *Ghost Hunters* and *Destination Truth*, as well as programs featuring people who use creativity and imagination to bring extraordinary ideas to life, such as *Face Off*, work well for the net. Krubsack says Syfy is also keen on formats that put people through "an extreme ride" (*Total Blackout*) or that document extreme experiences (*Paranormal Witness*).

HOW TO PITCH:

If Syfy doesn't already have a relationship with you, or if you don't have an agent, you can email Tori Socha (tori.socha@nbcuni.com), the director of alternative programming, for a submission release form before sending any materials. Socha will guide producers to the right person for their pitches.

PITCHING DON'TS:

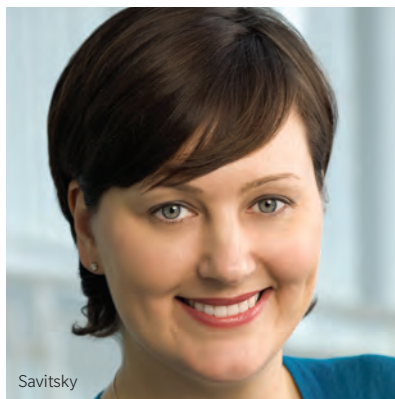
"As you can imagine, we've seen every ghost hunting group under the sun," he says, adding that unless your paranormal sleuths inhabit worlds different than the ones currently on air and use unique methodologies, it will be hard to put them on the channel.

VOLUME OF SERIES:

Most commissioned series are six hour-long episodes, though he is open to 30-minute shows.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

"A strong sense of characters and example storylines that you could see in series are a must," he says. "It's important to hit tone, as well. The sizzle reel needs to convince us that you can make the series, and please try to keep it under three minutes." **KA**



TLC

MARIANA FLYNN, AMY SAVITSKY

VICE PRESIDENTS, DEVELOPMENT

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

TLC is looking for series about fascinating families, extreme behaviors, larger-than-life characters or an insider's view of a hidden subculture. "Our brand transcends one specific genre," says Flynn. "That said, we are the leader in wedding programming and are always looking for new ways to share those stories. We like to be first to market and have a show that appeals to both male and female viewers."

The net recently greenlit a docuseries following baseball player Pete Rose and his fiancée, and is also set to air a show about the world's smallest siblings called *Big Tiny*, the real estate competition series *Four Houses*, a second season of *American Gypsy Wedding*, the one-hour competitive cheerleading special *Cheer Perfection* and specials based on reality series *Virgin Diaries*.

HOW TO PITCH:

"Know what works for us, but don't just duplicate what we already have," says Flynn. "Be prepared and be able to back up the pitch but get to the point. Also, learn how to take a pass or a 'no,' and don't try to convince us we're wrong when that's the answer."

WHAT THEY PAY:

"Everything is different," says Savitsky. "We can start with an airable pilot, we can order a limited series or we can go right into a full series order. The pricing, of course, changes based on the details of the show, but a general ballpark would be \$300,000 an hour."

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

A good sizzle should grab the commissioners' attention within the first few minutes and leave them wanting more. "If it's a family or a strong character, show us a range of their lives, and convince us they're great on camera," explains Savitsky. "We need to know that there's potential for a lot more based on what's on that tape, so be smart and thorough." **KR**

TARGET DEMO:

Looking for general adult programming with a dual skew. The demo is primarily female 18-49 but the net can be watched by the entire family.

CONTACT:

Submit via producers.discovery.com.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

“We can start with an airable pilot, order a limited series or go right into a full series order.”



TRAVEL CHANNEL

ANDY SINGER

GENERAL MANAGER

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Singer says his programming mission is to establish Travel Channel as the pre-eminent travel brand on the media landscape and "re-imagine travel entertainment." He points to *Hotel Impossible* as a "perfect fit" for the net, as it "exposes viewers to the world of travel, has a credible host and expert in Anthony Melchiorri and is both highly entertaining and information-rich." Also, *Baggage Battles* ticks the boxes as it goes behind the scenes at airport auctions – events that Travel Channel viewers can actually attend – and features auction experts who are both entertaining and likable.

Singer is also looking for key elements of travel to be part of a program's DNA: exploration (as seen in *Bizarre Foods America*), destination (as seen in *Trip Flip*), and industry (as seen in *Hotel Impossible* and *Airport 24/7: Miami*). Destination-oriented shows must be contemporary and not travelog-styled, and "it must expose our audience to places or experiences they can't find in a guidebook." Exploration programming should have a distinct POV and a credible host, and industry-oriented shows should "take an aspect of the travel world and make it accessible and interesting to our audience."

Half-hour formats that can be ordered in bulk will also be considered if they're the right fit.

HOW TO PITCH:

Producers can submit pitches to Bethany Latham, development manager, via Bethany.Latham@travelchannel.com.

PITCHING DON'TS:

Don't assume that Travel Channel only wants travelogs (it doesn't), or that it wants to be pitched everything you're also pitching to its competitors (again, it doesn't). Also, don't assume that the Scripps-owned net only wants characters, as it's quite keen on authoritative talent.

"Our audience reacts well to credible, likable talent that can take them on a journey and entertain them along the way," says Singer. "Don't look at talent from one angle. Journalists, pilots, tour guides, professors and soldiers might all be untapped resources."

SIZZLE TIPS:

Shoot and edit it well, and provide a clear concept of the show. And if you're featuring your on-air talent, Singer cautions, "we need to see them in-situation as if they were in a show. Reels that have talent presenting their bios to camera are of little use." **BW**

TREATMENTS OR TAPE?:

"One-sheets are good, but tape really helps sell an idea and can cut through a lot of clutter and time."

TARGET DEMO:

The network currently skews more male, but shows should appeal to both male and female viewers.

HOURS OR HALF-HOURS?:

"We will look at hours, but we're focusing mainly on half-hours."

“Our audience reacts well to credible, likable talent.”



TRUTV

MARISSA RONCA

VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Since truTV's programming has an element of comic relief, as seen in such series as *Impractical Jokers*, Ronca says the net definitely wants more "comedic reality" projects that combine humor with authenticity. The team is also looking for shows to complement its high-rated series *Lizard Lick Towing* and *Hardcore Pawn*.

Core elements for a pitch to truTV should include "unexpected characters, comic relief, conflict and a level of outrageousness," she says.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Men and women 25-49, with a 60/40 skew toward male viewers.

CONTACT:

Directors of development Mat Baxt or Paul Hardy via their assistant, Neil Padover (neil.padover@turner.com).

HOW TO PITCH:

TruTV's Mat Baxt or Paul Hardy can vet anything from a presentation tape to a one-line concept and let you know if you're on the right track, or if it's a pass and why. A show bible isn't necessary at the pitch stage, but you should have a clear format broken down or tape of the characters.

WHAT SHE WANTS IN A SIZZLE REEL:

"I know I keep using the word 'unexpected,' but the truth is that we see a lot of sizzle reels, and there's nothing like seeing a concept, world, or character that we've never seen before," she explains. **KA**



WE TV

LAUREN GELLERT

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS & DEVELOPMENT

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"WE tv is all about family and the family dynamic – the drama, humor, conflict, and incredible relationships people share when they're forced to live or work together," says Gellert. "Each original series is an unfiltered showcase of characters who are bold, compelling and have a juicy and relatable story to share." She points to *Braxton Family Values*, *Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best?*, and *Mary Mary* as examples.

But if you don't have a celeb at the center, it's not necessarily a deal-breaker, as Gellert says "a WE tv original gives viewers a relatable, unfiltered view of the drama and chaos and humor that's inherent in these family situations."

TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

No.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

SERIES VOLUMES:

Typically, "between six and 10 episodes of a series in both half and full-hour formats."

HOW TO PITCH:

Remember that WE tv only accepts pitches from "reputable lawyers, agents, managers, producers and production companies." If you fit that criteria, check the network's submission policy as stated on www.wetv.com and be sure to familiarize yourself with the net's content while there. "Memorable characters with big personalities" are wanted; shows that would appeal to men or that are similar to what it's aired in the past aren't. **BW**

WEATHER CHANNEL

MARY ELLEN IWATA

VP, ORIGINAL CONTENT & DEVELOPMENT



TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

Yes, "as long as the producer has a track record of producing for a major cable or broadcast channel." Include credits.

CONTACT:

meiwata@weather.com.

SERIES OR ONE-OFFS?:

Half-hour series.

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Iwata says The Weather Channel is "broadening our appeal while staying true to our weather roots," so in addition to those looking for the long-range forecast, the net is also programming for "weather enthusiasts" or, as Iwata puts it, "an upscale audience of 'doers' who are fascinated by all things outdoors." *Coast Guard Alaska* has the biggest overall ratings in the P25-49 demo, while *Lifeguard!* is bringing in more women, and *Ice Pilots* is attracting more upscale, higher income households.

HOW TO PITCH:

Iwata prefers a brief online or one-pager but if talent is featured then video helps. "If the characters have not been cast yet and we really like the concept, we can commission a character or sizzle reel," she says.

"Producers should think outside the box and not worry too much about 'the weather' being front and center," adds Iwata. "If we like an idea, and it feels right for the brand, we'll work with the producer to find the weather connection. **BW**





CBC 'DOC ZONE'

MICHAEL CLAYDON

AREA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER,
INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARIES

CONTACT INFO:

www.cbc.ca/independentproducers/genres/doc_zone/

SIZZLE REEL NECESSARY:

No.

TARGET DEMO / AUDIENCE:

A general audience evenly split between men and women, well educated.

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

'Doc Zone,' hosted and narrated by Ann-Marie MacDonald, is CBC's flagship anthology documentary series, airing Thursday nights at 9 p.m. on CBC TV. It commissions approximately 13 one-hour documentaries from Canadian independent producers.

"As a rule, we are looking for one-off documentaries and we try to spread our commissions across all regions of the country," says Claydon. "As an anthology series, we tackle a broad range of subjects, but all of our stories must be viewer-centric. By that, I mean the stories must relate to our audience and the world they live in."

Some docs focus on family, relationships, the environment, technology and social trends, as well as water cooler topics and stories behind the headlines. Crime stories rate well, as do disaster stories.

"This past season, we did well with docs like *Facebook Follies*, which dealt with the crazy things and the trouble people get into with social media," he says.

"We also did well with *Apocalypse 2012*, an end-of-the-world story, naturally!

"Our docs have high production values, are elegantly done and are entertaining as well as informative."

The strand doesn't run POV docs, biographies, or foreign affairs stories.

HOW TO PITCH:

"In pitching 'Doc Zone,' we ask that producers be flexible and willing to work closely with us to get the pitch where we need it," says Claydon. "My pet peeve is a pitch that clearly is out of our strike zone, in that it doesn't reflect any understanding of our series. Thankfully, we don't get too many of those! We also don't mind considering an idea that has reached a full proposal stage, again because we usually work with the producers to shape the final proposal."

WHAT IT PAYS:

Budgets vary widely, depending on the subject matter, but all 'Doc Zone' commissions utilize Canada Media Fund (CMF) funding, as well as other broadcast incentive funds such as Rogers or any regional funds. Claydon says his team also expects to see a producer investment or distribution advance in the budget. International coproductions are encouraged. A typical 'Doc Zone' budget is in the CDN\$300,000 – \$500,000 range. **KA**

“We ask that producers be flexible and willing to work closely with us.”



CBC FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT

JENNIFER DETTMAN

EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT

CONTACT INFO:

Jessica Schmiedchen, manager of development, via factualpitch@cbc.ca.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?

One- to two-pagers are fine; tape is good for character-driven projects.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

Don't pitch something that's "too niche – that belongs on a specialty network."

“We place a lot of emphasis on the second screen experience.”

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"We plan to build on the success of our primetime programming strategy and continue to look for large-scale reality and live event programming such as music performance, talent, game, constructed reality and social experiment television shows," says Dettman, of the factual entertainment department at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "In short – big, broad-based family entertainment with multi-platform possibilities."

As examples, she points to *Over the Rainbow*, a competition series that seeks to find the perfect Dorothy for the upcoming Andrew Lloyd Webber production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Business reality series click with Canadian audiences, as seen with the Ceeb's version of the hit format *Dragon's Den*, and the pubcaster is adding another one to the sked, with *The Big Decision*, in which business icons Jim Treiving and Arlene Dickinson assess two struggling companies and decide which one, if any, to help.

"We're also focused on reinventing performing arts programming, striving to broaden its appeal," she adds. "And we continue to look for low-cost additions to our daytime schedule."

As for volume, "We're looking for continuing and repeatable series. Eight to 10 episodes for hours; 10 to 13 episodes for half-hours."

Producers should also take note of the network's multi-platform ambitions. "As a modern public broadcaster, the need to engage with our audiences beyond the television show is so important," she says. "We look for programming that not only entertains audiences but also can unite them in a national conversation or collective experience. We don't just produce stand-alone shows anymore, we're creating entire experiences. For that reason we place a lot of emphasis on the second screen experience." Dettman points to last spring's *Canada's Smartest Person* and the upcoming *Over the Rainbow* as examples of how the net aims to extend properties to multiple screens.

HOW TO PITCH:

A signed submission release has to accompany each pitch and can be found at the department's independent producers' website, www.cbc.ca/independentproducers/genres/factual_entertainment.

SIZZLE TIPS:

"Short and snappy" wins for Dettman. "Don't feel like you have to tell us the entire story – that's what the one-pager is for. Make it entertaining and emotionally engaging." **BW**



CORUS ENTERTAINMENT

VIBIKA BIANCHI

VP ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING, LIFESTYLE, REALITY, FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT

NETWORKS IN HER PURVIEW:

W Network, Cosmo TV, kids net YTV, CMT Canada, OWN Canada, HBO Canada.

CONTACT INFO:

unscriptedoriginals@corusent.com

TREATMENT OR TAPE:

One-pagers and tape.

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

For W, Bianchi's looking for a range of reality programming containing big characters, high stakes and drama with a touch of humor. Recent successes include *Love It or List It*, *Property Brothers*, *Come Dine with Me* and *Undercover Boss Canada*.

"*Love it or List it* and *Property Brothers* represent our home programming but we are always looking beyond the home, as evidenced with *Undercover Boss*, which has opened a whole new world for us," she says. "We are exploring concepts that could work as companions to *Undercover Boss Canada*. At the same time we recently launched a hidden camera game show format, *Deal With It*, that we are also very excited about."

She's not in the market for weddings, relationships, fashion or beauty programming.

For OWN Canada's second year, true crime doc series bring in viewers, as proven by the programs *Devil You Know* and *Murder She Solved*, both currently in third season production. In addition, social experiment reality programming, such as *Million Dollar Neighbourhood*, has performed well for the network.

"Now in our second year we have a better sense of what has worked for our audience and will continue on that path," says Bianchi. "We're not looking for anything too 'on the nose' for the OWN brand. There needs to be an element of the unexpected."

Both W and OWN Canada target women in the 25-54 age demo.

HOW TO PITCH:

All pitches must be submitted via email, as Corus is no longer accepting mailed pitches. Corus Original Programming has a submissions website (www.corusoriginalprogramming.com) that has information for outside producers wishing to submit their proposals. Original programming coordinator Danielle Berger handles all the new submissions that come in for the unscripted networks.

WHAT THEY PAY:

From CDN\$50,000 (US\$49,700) per half-hour and up depending on the concept.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

"The sizzle must sell the concept but it doesn't have to cost a lot. If your concept features specific talent, show us what they do, why they are the best choice." **KA**

“We’re always looking beyond the home.”



KNOWLEDGE

MURRAY BATTLE

DIRECTOR, INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION
& PRESENTATION

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Knowledge Network is British Columbia's 24-hour arts and culture network and public educational broadcaster. It commissions original docs for its flagship strand 'Storyville' – inspired by the BBC strand of the same name – a two-hour slot that accommodates both feature length and one-hour films.

Knowledge accepts proposals from producers across Canada but preference is given to producers from British Columbia, as well as pre-buy and acquired programming from around the world. Proposals must come from an incorporated company.

"Our priority is for filmmaker-driven creative documentaries that entertain, enlighten and challenge our viewers," says Battle. "We will consider arts documentaries if they go beyond the traditional biopic and reflect larger social themes. The priority is to find strong stories that will engage our audience and stand the test of time."

WHAT THEY PAY:

The network's license fees are meant to represent only a portion of a total budget, according to the producer's portal. On first window commissions, Knowledge might invest up to CDN\$60,000 in license fees and will negotiate a role in development and production. Second window is up to \$10,000 for projects which have secured a lead broadcaster elsewhere in Canada. **KR**

CONTACT INFO:

Pitching guidelines can be found at knowledge.ca/producers.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

INTERNATIONAL COPROS:

Inter-provincial and international treaty copros are welcome, but for the latter, ownership needs to remain with the Canadian producer.

“The priority is to find strong stories that will stand the test of time.”



SHAW MEDIA

CHRISTINE SHIPTON

VP, ORIGINAL CONTENT

BACKGROUND:

Canada's Shaw Media owns traditional broadcaster Global Television and 18 specialty networks including HGTV Canada, Food Network Canada and Slice. Its Lifestyle Original Content Group has a centralized process that receives pitches for consideration across all its lifestyle channels.

"Specific coordinators handle the submissions, but I also say we have a lot of production executives and a show can come through any door of any production executive or coordinator and it doesn't hurt if you want to find your champion for your show," says Shipton.

"Although there are specific criteria for each channel, we want to focus on what are the strongest show ideas and then how we can adapt them to work on a specific channel rather than going from a more niche channel-focused strategy," adds Morgan.

Across the board, Shipton sums up what each of the Shaw nets are looking for: "Shows that draw big audiences. It sounds like a no brainer but we need to say that to producers often because it means that the ideas have to be broad enough for co-viewing. As we all know on the unscripted side, the amount of storytelling has become imperative. It isn't 'how-to,' it's not 'watch me do,' it's 'What is this story of the world that I'm in?'"

Its commissioners are usually on hand at the Realscreen Summit, Banff World Media Festival, and MIPCOM. Directors of original production Tanya Linton and Leslie Merklinger are also available to meet producers at Shaw's Toronto offices.

WHAT MAKES A SIZZLE REEL HOT:

"We accept pitches in all forms but if it is a character-driven pitch, seeing that person on tape and hopefully interacting with others in their world is always compelling," says Morgan. "We've gotten a bit wary of the slick sizzle reel that is cut together to impress but the characters don't hold up when you watch an actual scene with them."

"If you're presenting characters, you want to make sure you've shown some vulnerability," adds Shipton. "Show them in their everyday life and then some quiet moments. It'll show a range of the person."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TARGET DEMOS:

Target demo for Shaw's specialty audiences is 25-54 adults, and for Slice it's 25-54 women. For broadcast channel Global it's the 18-49 demo. "With Canadian programming we are looking at the whole 2+. We like to know how many Canadians across the board are watching us," says Shipton.

TAKES UNSOLICITED PITCHES?:

No.

CONTACT INFO:

For lifestyle pitches, try Brynn Tschirhart at Brynn.Tschirhart@shawmedia.ca or Deirdre Finn at deirdre.finn@shawmedia.ca. For factual pitches, email Patricia DiGiovanni at patricia.digiovanni@shawmedia.ca.



EMILY MORGAN

SENIOR DIRECTOR, ORIGINAL LIFESTYLE CONTENT

FOOD NETWORK CANADA

Food Network Canada commissions about 140 hours of original Canadian programming per year with a focus on big, primetime reality and competition shows such as recent hits *Top Chef Canada*, which is going into its third season, and *Recipe To Riches*, as well as host-driven fare such as *You Gotta Eat Here*.

Commissioners are generally looking for ongoing series rather than one-offs, and character-driven rather than instructional programs.

"We accept pitches in all forms but characters/hosts are very important, so even a short demo tape is very helpful," says Morgan. "Most orders are for 14 or 26 episodes. Because we do a lot of 30-minute shows, we try to commission with a delivery schedule that is very tight and will allow us to air two episodes back-to-back on a weekly basis. We are very open to coproduction."

GLOBAL

For factual content for Shaw's broadcast network, Shipton and her team commission docs from indie prodcos for the one-off documentary strand 'Close Up.' They look for films that fit the strand's tagline: "Hidden worlds, personal obsessions and things that drive us." "They're unusual worlds that are right in our community," describes Shipton.

On the entertainment side, Global's team looks for shows with a national appeal – either shows that take viewers across the country or characters that all Canadians will connect with. "It can't be too place-specific," she advises.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

“Characters and hosts are very important so even a short demo is helpful.”

SHAW MEDIA (CONTINUED)

HGTV CANADA

Highly formatted, repeatable shows tend to work well on HGTV Canada, which skews about 60% female. The network commissions about 200 hours of original programming per year with an emphasis on home-centric shows, real estate and renovation. Most orders are 14- to 26-episode, half-hour series, and the network regularly enters into copros with its U.S. Scripps-owned counterpart and broadcasters in the UK.

Recent hits include *Massive Moves*, *House of Bryan* and *Income Property*. "We are looking to expand the range of shows beyond what is traditionally associated with home and garden," says Morgan, pointing to recently green-lit series *House Hazards*, which humorously explores how things can go awry in the average person's home. Host-driven shows such as *Holmes Makes it Right* starring reno-man-to-the-rescue Mike Holmes continue to do well on HGTV Canada.

"We are all in the business of making shows to draw the biggest audiences possible and we don't want to exclude great ideas that might not immediately fit," she adds. "We're also trying to challenge producers to think beyond what has been seen as lifestyle programming in the past."

SLICE NETWORK

Relationship-focused series and unique family situations are big with Slice viewers. Top programs include *My Teenage Wedding* and *Real Housewives of Vancouver*, which was just renewed for a second season. The network will also jump into the high-concept format space when *Big Brother Canada* debuts in 2013. Recent commissions include bridal show *Keasha's Perfect Dress* and *The Mistress*, a series hosted by infidelity expert Sarah Symonds.

Shipton says Slice is looking to broaden its programming so that it's not so female-skewing. She cites *Teen Weddings* as a fitting example, more about family dynamics than nuptials, and the upcoming *Big Brother Canada*, which is "one of the broadest concepts you can do."

Slice commissions about 100 hours of original Canadian programs every year. Most orders are for 14- to 26 half-hour episodes.



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Photo Credit: David Spewart and Joseph Michael

**CONTACT INFO:**

proposals@zoomermedia.ca

TREATMENT OR TAPE:

Both are welcome.

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

45+ (with the majority over 60).

VISION TV**JOAN JENKINSON**

VICE PRESIDENT, INDEPENDENT
PRODUCTION & MULTI-FAITH CONTENT,
ZOOMERMEDIA

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Jenkinson is commissioning independent productions for three strands, and is looking for one-off and limited documentary series, half-hour supernatural and paranormal documentary series, and half-hour gospel music programs, all with religion at the core.

For the first strand, she's looking for religion as it intersects with science, archaeology, politics and world events, and cites as examples *The Jesus Discovery*, a doc on the earliest evidence of Jesus' resurrection after death; *Temple Mount*, a three-part series on the history and future of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; and the three-part series *The Church of Elvis*, on how faith influenced the music icon, and how he inspired near religious adulation among his fans.

PITCHING TIPS:

"Start by emailing a short paragraph, followed by a phone conversation. If there is interest submit a full proposal," she says. Proposals should include the region in which the producer's company is located, logline, synopsis, treatment, CVs of the creative team, a summary of the budget, and a release form, among other details outlined online at www.visiontv.ca/about-vision/producer-guidelines. Also, "don't forget to identify upfront the genre, length and number of episodes."

WHAT THEY PAY:

License fees range from CDN\$20,000 to \$45,000 per half-hour and \$30,000 to \$75,000 per hour.

HOW TO MAKE A SMOKING SIZZLE REEL:

"Sizzle reels should be treated like mini-programs – with a beginning, middle and end. Only use clips that present subjects delivering the best possible performance." **KA**

“Sizzle reels should be treated like mini-programs.”

**CONTACT EMAILS:**

Koulla.Anastasi@aetn.co.uk

TREATMENT OR TAPE:

Treatment please, tape isn't necessary.

TARGET DEMO /AUDIENCE:

For CI and BIO, 45+ female.

A+E NETWORKS UK**KOULLA ANASTASI**HEAD OF ACQUISITIONS AND
COMMISSIONING, CRIME &
INVESTIGATION UK/BIO**WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:**

For Crime & Investigation (CI), Anastasi is constantly on the lookout for female-skewing true crime programming. "Our audience is really loyal, so the expectation and pressure on fresh content is pretty high," she says. Programs must be on completed cases, since the network doesn't cover anything still going through the courts.

The initial composition needs to be strong, and it needs a really engaging series title. "Second to that, [it needs to be] an absolutely gripping story," she says. "I talk about crime drama a lot, but the twists and turns of the story, the cliffhangers [and] those mystery elements are ones we try to apply to our documentaries as well."

While much of the programming for the channel tends to come from North America and the UK, she's keen to acquire European crime stories for A+E Networks' European feed. "We're really on the lookout for producers and distribution companies to come to us with their local crime content," she offers. "That's one of our big priorities."

She mostly orders series, usually a six- to 10-episode run, while specials need to be well-known crime stories in order to stand out in the schedule. Anastasi cites Jupiter Entertainment's *Snapped: Women Who Kill* as a breakout hit.

As for Bio, it's primarily an acquisitions channel at the moment. A lot of content tends to come from the U.S. sister network, but original series *A Gypsy Life for Me* was its highest rated to date, and production has begun on season two.

PITCHING DON'TS:

She isn't interested in very male-skewing programming, as well as "caught on camera" shows.

HOW TO PITCH:

"We need a topline, and I'm happy to give feedback to a topline idea. Beyond that, a couple of pages and I don't need a huge PDF or anything like that."

WHAT THEY PAY:

Commissioning starts at around the £35,000 (US\$54,900) mark to about £50,000 per hour. **KA**

“Our audience is really loyal so the expectation on fresh content is pretty high.”



CONTACTS:

charlotte.moore@bbc.co.uk;
samantha.anstiss@bbc.co.uk (BBC 1 & 2);
maxine.watson@bbc.co.uk (BBC 1);
emma.willis@bbc.co.uk (BBC 2 & 4);
clare.paterson1@bbc.co.uk (BBC4)

AND DON'T FORGET...:

All pitches need to be logged onto the BBC's commissioning site:
<https://ssl.bbc.co.uk/ecommissioning/>

“Original and innovative ideas underpinned with a strong sense of purpose.”

BBC

CHARLOTTE MOORE

COMMISSIONING EDITOR,
DOCUMENTARIES

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Moore seeks out a broad range of documentary singles and series across all four BBC channels, “from observational to presenter-led, authored, director-led films and lightly formatted programs,” she explains.

“Our focus is very much a British audience, so the majority of what I commission is domestic or exploring the world through the eyes of a British presenter, but there are exceptions if the subject feels universally relevant – for example *Welcome to Lagos* or *Amish: A Secret Life*.”

Projects for the BBC should inform as well as entertain, she says. “I’m not looking for pure entertainment. I’m looking for original and innovative – not derivative – ideas underpinned with a strong sense of purpose; ideas that feel timely and relevant, that provoke our audience to challenge their prejudices and preconceptions, or inspire viewers to reappraise their views.”

She adds that there is room for wit and humor (with titles such as *The Tube*), for hybrid forms (*Volcano Live*, *The Secret History of Our Streets*) and for very different types of programming. “Although more traditional forms of documentary are at the heart of what we do, we are interested in innovating with form,” she explains.

HOW TO PITCH:

“Don’t send me a long list of ideas, send one idea at a time and you’re bound to get a quicker response,” Moore offers. “Don’t try to pitch an idea when all you’re really pitching is access to someone or somewhere.”

“I want to know why you want to make the film, what the film will be saying, why you think it feels timely and current, what your attitude or angle is on the subject and what the underlying purpose of the documentary would be,” she adds. “Do send taster tapes – they help bring the idea to life, show the tone and attitude of the film, and often cut through the vast quantities of paper proposals we receive.”

As for the process, Moore says producers should email her or any member of the docs team via the addresses cited, with brief outlines within the body of the email and fuller proposals attached if available. “But please also log all ideas on our online e-commissioning system as well to ensure your idea doesn’t get lost in our overcrowded inboxes,” she adds. **AB**



CHANNEL 4

NICK MIRSKY

DEPUTY HEAD OF FACTUAL

CONTACT:

For series:

Nick Mirsky (nmirsky@channel4.co.uk), assistant (hjlillis@channel4.co.uk); and Mark Raphael (mraphael@channel4.co.uk), assistant (jhoney@channel4.co.uk).

For 'Cutting Edge' and other singles:

Emma Cooper (ecooper@channel4.co.uk).

For 'True Stories'/ singles:

Anna Miralis (amiralis@channel4.co.uk).

For 'First Cut'/ singles:

Lina Prestwood (lprestwood@channel4.co.uk), assistants (jhoney@channel4.co.uk, agrewal@channel4.co.uk)

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Mirsky says the C4 audience wants "wit, warmth, intelligence, immediacy, drama, realism – delivered in an entertaining and surprising way."

Mirsky says he'd like big series that reflect modern life and worlds in a warm, entertaining and engaging manner, such as *Educating Essex*, *One Born Every Minute* and *24 Hours in A&E*. He's also on the lookout for what he dubs "talking point TV," or provocative and thought-provoking content with a point of view, such as *Making Bradford British*. For the 11 p.m. slot, Mirsky is in need of edgy documentaries about popular life, such as *Bouncers*, while for the 'True Stories' strand, he wants "extraordinary and authored stories." (See more on page 39.) New directing talent is key for 'First Cut,' and dramatic and insightful documentaries about contemporary life are best for 'Cutting Edge.'

"Note that we do fund development for ideas that we think have potential. So companies can bring us ideas with a view to talking about a possible development phase," he adds.

PITCHING DON'TS:

"It's not great when you feel people are only trying to second guess what they think you might [want]," he says. "It is really important that people who pitch believe in their projects."

Also, don't be too dogmatic and don't oversell. "Any program is going to be a bit of a journey from concept to execution," Mirsky offers. "Show that you are aware there may be adjustments on that road."

THE PAY SCALE:

Pricing, of course, varies according to projects. 'First Cut' docs are commissioned at £100,000 (US\$157,000) per episode. Other programs usually cost between £150,000-£180,000. Series volumes range from two episodes to 11.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

Mirsky maintains that sizzles should feature characters, wit, humor, privileged access and "the promise of very watchable actuality." **KA**

“Any program is going to be a bit of a journey from concept to execution.”

C4 (CONTINUED)

JILL FULLERTON-SMITH

COMMISSIONING EDITOR, SPECIALIST FACTUAL (SCIENCE)

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Fullerton-Smith says she's in need of "bold ideas about the science of our every day – programs that make the ordinary extraordinary." Pitched projects can be on anything from the weather and food, to architecture and the home, or engineering and technology. Fullerton-Smith also lets on that she's always looking for "awkward, reputational ideas" such as *Mummifying Alan*.

The factual science programming also needs to be content-led with a new way of telling the science.

PITCHING "DON'TS":

Don't pitch pseudo-science. Fullerton-Smith says the worst pitches she hears are in the vein of: "We are going to convince you homeopathy works."

THE PAY SCALE:

C4's specialist factual division has a large range, so she says there are many different tariffs, and it is always prepared to find money for big ideas with ambition. **KA**

TARGET DEMO:

ABC1

CONTACT:www.channel4.com/info/commissioning**TREATMENT OR TAPE:**

Two pages are enough; tape if main character or presenter is essential.



ANNA MIRALIS

COMMISSIONING EDITOR, 'TRUE STORIES'

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

For the 'True Stories' strand, Miralis looks for 10 films a year. "I look for stand-out 'stranger than fiction' narratives and unique authored takes on hidden worlds and communities in Britain and abroad," she says. "Generally a tabloid headline with a very authored take." The strand also airs a small number of theatrical docs.

Recent projects include *Gypsy Blood*, *My Social Network Stalker*, *Six Million Dollar Conman*, *Knockout Scousers*, *The Girl Who Became Three Boys* and *America's Animal Hoarder: Horror at the Zoo*.

"The programs need to be singular, get noticed and feel very C4," she adds. While budgets vary, Miralis says the range can be "between £70,000-£200,000."

HOW TO PITCH:

Send an email with a brief outline and sizzle if possible. Check the website address to the left for more details.

Be sure to watch some of the strand's recent titles to become familiar with the tone and type of films being commissioned. **AB/BW**

TARGET AUDIENCE:

ABC1s and 18-34 year-olds. "Generally, heavy consumers of documentary," says Miralis.

WEBSITE:

www.channel4.com/info/commissioning/4producers/documentaries



CHANNEL 5

MICHELLE CHAPPELL

COMMISSIONING EDITOR, NEWS,
CURRENT AFFAIRS & DOCUMENTARIES

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

For peak time, she's on the lookout for strong and ambitious ob-docs, full of action and energy, such as *Police Interceptors*, *Benidorm ER* and *World's Toughest Truckers*. She'd also like to add stand-out, attention-grabbing series, such as *World's Scariest...* to the schedule.

"It's mainstream, attention-grabbing, knock-out subjects, presented in a really glossy way," she says.

Chappell says the Channel 5 audience doesn't require complicated or complex treatments of stories, and that programs need to be entertaining. "We're not finger-waggy or [here to] tell you what to do; we're not particularly good for you," she says. If the program takes the viewer somewhere new in a "jaw-dropping" fashion, it's done its job.

"The most important thing for us is quality. I think Channel 5 has traditionally been perceived as a 'down market' channel and we've suffered from that perception," says Chappell.

HOW TO PITCH:

She suggests having a topline ready, and being able to tell her how the show is going to work.

"Sometimes, if the idea isn't quite right but they're on to something, we'll have a follow up meeting," she says. "Sometimes, if the idea is good enough, then we'll ask to see a taster tape."

PITCHING DON'TS:

Don't pitch sloppy seconds from other broadcasters. She doesn't want to find mention of another channel in pitching documents, or hear, "This has already been turned down by C4 and we think it'll be perfect for you."

"Always come to us first," she says.

And don't bring reams of paper. **KA**

CONTACT:

michelle.chappell@five.tv

TREATMENT OR TAPE:

Treatment.

“We’re not
finger-waggy
or here to tell
you what to
do.”



SKY

CELIA TAYLOR

HEAD OF FACTUAL AND FEATURES

CONTACT:

Siobhan.Mulholland@bskyb.com,
Clare.Handford@bskyb.com

SERIES VOLUMES:

Hours (44 minutes), usually more than six episodes.

“We want broad but not bland; populist but not dumb.”

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

As head of factual and features, Taylor oversees unscripted content for the pay-TV network's portfolio of premium channels, which include Sky1, Sky Living, Sky Arts and Sky Atlantic.

For Sky1, she's commissioning a genre she dubs “funny factual,” as seen in *An Idiot Abroad*, and low-cost access series. For Sky Atlantic, which recently announced plans for its ‘Footprints’ doc strand and a Nutopia-produced series on British history, she's after talent-fronted documentary series, and finds that smart and entertaining programs such as *Networks of Power* work well for the channel. For Sky Arts, Taylor's in search of big multi-platform ideas. Lastly, for Sky Living, she'd like returnable formats and series ideas.

“We want broad but not bland. Populist, but not dumb. Glossy not grimy,” Taylor says.

“Ideas can be mainstream but they do need personality, emotion and a sense of spirit.”

AUDIENCES:

Taylor says Sky Living is aiming to skew younger, while the Sky Atlantic audience expects high quality intelligent programming. Sky1 features mainstream family viewing, and Sky Arts serves “passionate niche audiences,” with content such as opera, but the aim is to grow and broaden that audience as well.

PITCHING DON'TS:

Don't pitch one-offs, or ideas that aren't terrestrial in their scale or ambition.

SIZZLE REEL TIPS:

“If it's a character based ob-doc, [tape] is the quickest way to get people to understand and love the idea,” she says. For sizzle reels, she's expecting “something that makes me laugh, cry or go, ‘Wow.’” **KA**

**UKTV****SHIRANI SABARATNAM**

COMMISSIONING EDITOR – LIFESTYLE

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"Big talent passion projects that cut through our schedule" are tops for Sabaratnam, who adds that innovative projects with multi-platform elements are also appreciated. She maintains that UKTV is not looking for derivative or hybrid formats, and since repeatability is important for most of its channels, it's not looking for one-off events or live shows.

"Commissions need to stand out from our acquisitions; they need to be noisy, innovative and multi-platform," she says.

GOOD FOOD:

For Good Food, the aim for primetime is to commission big name talent and channel-defining ideas, to build on hits like *Monster Munchies* and *Choccywoccydoodah*, while factual entertainment formats need to be loud and fun with a "wow" factor. Brand-funded projects are welcome, as well as travelogs. They pay £40,000-£50,000 (US\$62,800-\$78,500) per hour, and £20,000-£25,000 per half hour.

HOME:

The network is looking for series ideas for 2013, with volumes ranging from 15 or 20 x 30-minute episode orders or 10 x one-hour episodes. Shows should be self-contained, repeatable, and have 360-degree appeal. Talent has to be known or credible, and the tone should be positive and aspirational. Areas the network would explore include ordinary people living in amazing homes, relocation specialists, and character-driven series, as well as established Home subject matter such as property funding, renovation, interior design, makeovers, reveals and transformations. The network isn't interested in topical ideas tied to the property market, non-narrative property shows, gardening, antique-based shows or *Come Dine With Me* derivations. The channel pays £28,000 per 30-minute episode or £50,000 per one-hour.

YESTERDAY:

UKTV's history channel Yesterday is on the lookout for documentary, factual formats and ob-docs on stories with a strong human dimension. While the heart of the channel is docs focused on the 1940s, Yesterday is interested in stretching into new areas, such as antiques with a twist, engineering or invention under pressure, heritage and genealogy. It'd also like character-led ob-docs. Its peak time pays £70,000-£90,000 per hour.

WATCH:

Lastly, entertainment channel Watch is looking to capitalize on the success of its series featuring magician Dynamo (*Magician Impossible*), with non-magic focused

CONTACT INFO:

uktv.co.uk/network/homepage/sid/9116/

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

For Good Food, adults, 25-54; For Home, women, 35-54; For Yesterday, 45+

“Commissions need to be noisy, innovative and multi-platform.”

programming that can also deliver genuine, warm and celebratory entertainment. Watch is, however, also looking for other magic programming that will complement, rather than compete with, its Dynamo programming, as well as shows with extreme characters and visual spectacles. Watch tends to pay £80,000-£120,000 per hour.

PITCHING DON'TS:

"Coming to pitching meetings totally unprepared" is a big turn-off. Sabaratnam advises to read the channel briefs as posted online and watch the channels to get their respective tones, styles and feels. "Have talent attached if possible," she adds.

SIZZLE REEL TIP:

Sizzle reels need to capture the format and talent in five to 10 minutes. If it's an ob-doc idea, show your access to larger-than-life characters or to a community that is rarely seen on television. "Sizzle reels should totally encapsulate the tone, talent and access of the program or series that you envisage." **KA**

FOR MORE COMMISSIONER PROFILES, VISIT **REALSCREEN.COM**



ORF/UNIVERSUM – AUSTRIA

ANDREW SOLOMON

HEAD OF NATURAL HISTORY AND SCIENCE

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

As part of his remit, Solomon oversees Austrian public broadcaster ORF's 'Universum' strand, which airs wildlife, natural history and some science programming.

'Universum' targets a family audience and a more mature demographic which appreciates and expects high production values in blue chip natural history, popular science and archaeology docs.

Among the recent successes, Solomon says "our two-parter *Danube – Europe's Amazon* scored well, and high-end humans and animals, like the BBC's *Super Smart Animals*, also work for our audience. Magazine and reportage styles don't work on our slot."

Budgets for 'Universum' start from €300,000 [US\$371,000] per hour upwards. "'Universum' works best with single hours or, rarely, limited series – up to five episodes," says Solomon.

'Universum' titles must have high production values and "impeccable" photography. "We prefer single hours or short series," says Solomon. "Our family and mature audience likes fabulous images, strong stories and the occasional surprise," Solomon explains. Docs should also be challenging enough to make the audience feel more intelligent.

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitchers "should ensure that pitches describe the film, rather than the theme." Send all projects, sizzle reels and finished films to Birgit Weber, via the email above.

Comprehensive one-pagers are welcomed, as are DVDs and downloadable trailers. **AB**

CONTACT:

Email Birgit Weber at birgit.weber@orf.at. No lawyer or agent needed.

WHERE YOU'LL FIND HIM:

MIPTV, MIPCOM, Sunny Side of the Doc, Jackson Hole, Wildscreen and WCSFP.

“Our audience likes fabulous images, strong stories and the occasional surprise.”



CONTACTS:

Mette Hoffmann Meyer (meho@dr.dk), head of documentaries

Anders Bruus (anbr@dr.dk) for DR 2 and coproduction proposals

Stine Preem (strp@dr.dk) for DR K and DR3

“Compelling characters and a strong narrative are musts for all of our programming.”

DRTV – DENMARK

METTE HOFFMANN MEYER

HEAD OF DOCUMENTARIES
AND COPRODUCTIONS

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

For flagship channel DR 1, Hoffmann Meyer says she and her team “are always looking for high quality crime and powerful human interest stories, and the weekly current affairs strand ‘Horisont’ seeks stories that set the agenda on contemporary pressing issues.”

On the factual entertainment front, she says the team is always looking for the next *Who Do You Think You Are?* or *Secret Millionaire*.

“Our weekly feature doc strand ‘Dokumania’ on DR 2 is still a popular, almost cult, primetime pick,” adds Hoffmann Meyer. “*Inside Job* and *The Ambassador* were among last year’s highest-rated titles. ‘DR 2 Global’ is our weekly current affairs strand, for which titles like *Sri Lanka’s Killing Fields* and *Hair India* performed well.

“Compelling characters and a strong narrative are musts for all our programming,” she says. “We also appreciate a sense of humor – only when called for obviously – and old-fashioned traits like integrity and independence are still a condition for our editorial evaluation.”

TARGET DEMOS FOR CHANNELS:

The DR portfolio of channels targets a broad spectrum of the Danish audience. “Arts and history on DR K has added to our appeal to special interest groups, and the channel is already recognized by a dedicated niche audience,” Hoffmann Meyer says.

“We have more popular appeal [programming] like the BBC’s natural history programs and Jamie Oliver’s cooking shows on DR1; DR2 is the ‘smarter’ channel that focuses on news and current affairs; and DR 3 targets the younger part of the audience – ages 18-39.”

DOS AND DON'TS WHEN PITCHING:

“Be honest,” says Hoffmann Meyer. “Don’t try to pitch a program you know isn’t a fit for us. We would like programs that are structured for many commercial breaks.

“We also would not want documentaries commissioned by special interest groups, [or docs that have] a missionary tone or a lack of integrity.”

For coproduction proposals she seeks one-pagers and/or brief outlines. “Footage of the main characters is always a plus,” she adds. “We have three yearly proposal deadlines for coproductions: February 1, June 1 and September 1.”

BUDGETS:

“What we pay varies a lot as we have many channels and strands, along with other parameters such as want and need,” Hoffmann Meyer explains. “Commissions and purchases can vary from €500 to €250,000. Most of our strands have fixed purchase budgets.” **AB**



DISCOVERY NETWORKS EUROPE

SARAH THORNTON

HEAD OF PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT,
LIFESTYLE AND ENTERTAINMENT, UK/
DISCOVERY NETWORKS EUROPE,
DISCOVERY NETWORKS INTERNATIONAL

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

When it comes to its lifestyle programming, as seen on TLC International, DNI is looking for transformational series in the classic genres of body image, fashion and makeovers. The network's most effective programming focuses on shows about people tackling relatable life challenges, such as switching careers, getting married, having kids and buying a home.

Top-performing series include *My Naked Secret*, *What Not to Wear*, *Cake Boss*, *I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant* and *American Gypsy Brides*.

"The formats that work have universal themes that resonate with viewers, they are redemptive, transformative and entertaining but with takeout," says Thornton. "Talent is hugely important to us, both new faces and established. If established, they need to have some sort of international profile in order to give us value for money."

WHAT NOT TO PITCH?:

Shows lacking a juicy PR hook, shows about divorce, campaign-style series or "anything too worthy." Also be sure to avoid bringing to the table "ideas that have clearly been round the block."

WHAT MAKES A KILLER SIZZLE:

Thornton says a sure-fire sizzle "clearly states what the format is, excites us and leaves us wanting more." **KR**

CONTACT INFO:

Try sarah_thornton@discovery.com or development producer Jules Brown at Jules_brown@discovery.com. Producers should check out the online ideas submission database producers.discovery.com.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

TARGET DEMO /AUDIENCE:

Thornton's nets are aimed at ages 25-45 with a female skew. Core viewer is age 35 and for co-viewing couples the target age is 29.

“The formats that work are redemptive, transformative and entertaining.”



ELIZABETH MCINTYRE

HEAD OF PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT,
FACTUAL, WESTERN EUROPE, DISCOVERY
NETWORKS INTERNATIONAL

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

For the factual-oriented channels, McIntyre says the audience is "male-skewed but increasingly co-viewing, 18-49 years old. Our viewers love facts, wit, and good stories well told with compelling characters."

With that in mind, McIntyre says she's looking for three types of factual and specialist factual commissions to air internationally, within the genres of "engineering, cars, science, history, endurance and adventure, and combinations of those genres."

First, she's keen on returnable, character-led narratives such as *Salvage Hunters* or *Wheeler Dealers*, featuring amateur or professional experts.

She's also on the lookout for returnable process-driven formats such as *How Do They Do It* that "dig deep into how things are made and how they operate."

Thirdly, specials – either news-reactive such as *Norway Massacre: The Killer's Mind* or "unique, epic adventures or achievements" such as *World's Toughest Drive* – work well.

Core elements for Discovery factual programming include "curiosity about the world; compelling characters on personal high stakes missions, with knowledge to impart but still learning; [and] extraordinary locations."

HOW TO PITCH:

Don't send in a long, exhaustive treatment when two succinct pages will do (see "Treatment or Tape?"). And McIntyre prefers being pitched format ideas rather than subjects. "I'm looking for smart, distinct takes on heartland subject matters; ideas that will play to an international audience." **BW**

CONTACT:

Try elizabeth_mcintyre@discovery.com. Her assistant, Gemma Rogers, can send through a factual commissions brief when contacted at gemma_rogers@discovery.com.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

For treatments, a couple of pages with "a clear mission statement" work best. For talent ideas, send through links or any footage you have. "Material shot on a phone works just as well as a carefully crafted talent sizzle."

“Our viewers love facts, wit and good stories well told with compelling characters.”

PLANÈTE - FRANCE

WHAT IT'S DOING:

French net Planète+ is setting aside a sizable portion of its commissioning budget to pre-buy two ambitious civilization series or docu-dramas per year, in a bid to compete in an increasingly crowded market.

Discussing his desires for international docs at Sunny Side of the Doc in La Rochelle, Olivier Stroh, the director of Canal+'s documentary channels, also said that acquisitions are important to the channel, representing around 60% of its line-up.

As for French docs, the channel is refocusing its commissioning strategy towards fewer but more high-end and off-the-beaten track titles, increasing its production budget from €1 million to €2.2 million (US\$1.26 million to \$2.77 million).

The two first such high-end doc commissions will arrive on air this season, one being a 4 x 52-minutes series from Gédéon Programmes about the history of Paris and its construction, which will feature CGI recreations and docu-drama elements. Planète injected €800,000 into the production.

Another event-driven doc will be *The Private Life of Dictators*, produced by Maria Roche and

distributed by Upside Television, which Planète+ invested €300,000 in.

Next to these event-driven docs, Planète+ is working on documentaries that bring in different kinds of points of view or contributions, such as a program on French gangs featuring former gang leaders who have agreed to talk; and in another genre, *Hitler my Neighbour*, which looks at the rise of Hitler through the eyes of a six-year-old Jewish child who used to live next door to the tyrant.

The Planète documentary channels of Canal+ are attempting to reinforce their exclusive and original programming offerings. At Sunny Side, Stroh said Planète+ aims to broadcast "the best of French and international documentaries." The group also runs Planète No Limit, Planète Justice and Planète Thalassa, all of which will introduce new shows and series in the fall.

As for the main Canal+ premium channel, which devotes its line-up mostly to movies and sports, the net will carry on with its strategy of 10 primetime documentaries per year, plus some in the second part of the evenings; its 'Nouveaux Explorateurs' weekend strand; and the acquisition of feature-length docs featured at major festivals such as Sundance. **MAB**

RMC DÉCOUVERTE - FRANCE

WHAT IT IS:

New French documentary channel RMC Découverte is slated for a December 12 launch. The channel was granted a free-to-air license in March, as part of a bid for six new HD channels on digital terrestrial platforms broadcast all over France.

It is owned by media group Nextradio, which also runs news channel BFMTV, cabsat channel BFM Business TV, and radio station RMC.

Nextradio president Alain Weill hired Guénaelle Trolly to be RMC Découverte's program director, with Trolly having formerly held the same position at Fox International Channels in France.

WHAT IT WANTS:

"We are currently fine-tuning our editorial line," Weill told *realscreen* at Sunny Side of the Doc in June, where the company was looking for some 600 hours of programming. "Our schedule will include various genres of documentaries, with strong focuses on adventure, environment, history, and science programming, which should get primetime strands.

"We are looking for all kinds of programming, from immersive docs and hosted documentaries, to docu-dramas, and we are more specifically here watching for any new international trends."

RMC Découverte is seeking first free-to-air rights for shows, but doesn't really mind if programming was

previously broadcast on cabsat channels, "as there is not that much competition as opposed to terrestrial broadcasters."

Under French regulations, the channel will dedicate 60% of its line-up to European fare, including 40% French programming. In addition, the channel will invest in original programming and also commission documentaries. **MAB**

“Strong focuses on adventure, environment, history and science programming.”

**CONTACTS:**

claudia.schreiner@mdr.de,
katja.wildermuth@mdr.de

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

Both.

TARGET DEMO/AUDIENCE:

The German pubcaster reaches a million viewers and has a mainly female audience ages 40-49 and over 65.

ARD/MDR – GERMANY**CLAUDIA SCHREINER**

HEAD OF PROGRAM CULTURE & SCIENCE
(TV)

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

MDR is a public service channel in the country's eastern region. Based in Leipzig, it contributes approximately 10% of the programming to national broadcaster ARD and delivers content to Franco-German network ARTE and Central Eastern European net 3sat. It is broadcast via cable, satellite and terrestrial networks.

At MDR, Schreiner is looking for documentaries and feature docs with both regional and national appeal related to history, society and science with strong, emotional narrative arcs. Docs should have a particular focus on stories set in Eastern Europe and Russia or the former Soviet bloc. Historical stories from World War II carry big interest. Feature docs about contemporary issues should also focus on Eastern European stories.

MDR also programs wildlife, ethnological and science docs that offer viewers some sort of valuable takeaway, such as "a new technique of brain surgery or the revival of fauna and flora in a polluted area," she says. "References to the region or to German research are helpful."

HOW TO PITCH:

The best approach is to email a brief outline summarizing the dramatic approach and storyline with links to trailers, and information regarding your previous work.

Commissions range from €35,000-€200,000 (US\$43,000-\$246,000) and €15,000-€100,000 for one-offs and coproductions.

As for pitching strategies, Schreiner says success will be had with simplicity. "Be focused. Don't talk too long, write too many pages or explain too much." **KR**

“Be focused.
Don't talk too
long, write too
many pages
or explain too
much.”

ZDF – GERMANY

CHANNEL BREAKDOWN:

Factual programming is aired on the main channel ZDF, the satellite network 3sat, Franco-German network ARTE, and digital channels ZDFneo, ZDFinfo, and ZDFkultur.

DEPARTMENTS:

ZDF's content is commissioned by editors in various departments, which include contemporary history, current affairs, environmental affairs, culture and science.

WHAT THEY PROGRAM:

As seen in the brochure "Factual Programming on ZDF," available to producers via the ZDF Enterprises website at www.zdf-enterprises.de/en/coproductions/coproductions/documentaries, the German public broadcaster airs numerous documentary strands, including weekly doc broadcasts in two primetime slots.

In giving the genre such prominence, ZDF also sets high standards for what it airs. Top-notch visual quality, air-tight research and keen attention to the narrative element are requirements.

Contemporary history commissions air on Tuesdays at 8:15pm, with approximately 22 x 45-minute programs and 3 x 90-minute shows slotted over the course of a year. The majority of these are ZDF in-house productions and commissions, with the remaining 20% being coproductions and acquisitions. Another history slot, 'ZDF History,' airs repeats of primetime series and acquisitions on Sunday nights at 11 p.m. Examples of recent history fare include *Secrets of the Third Reich* and *Busting the Berlin Wall*.

Approximately 40 current affairs specials also air in the earlier Tuesday night slot. Thirty of those come from the department of current affairs, and the remainder from ZDF's history department. Of these, 20 are commissioned and the remainder is in-house production. The strand airs on Sundays at 1:30 p.m., and the majority of the 37 x 28-minute programs are in-house productions and acquisitions. They also air on digi channel ZDFinfo.

The department of environmental affairs oversees environmental strand 'Planet e,' which includes programs on such subjects as nature conservation and biodiversity, human beings and development, energy supply, green economy, and climate change among others.

ZDF's department of culture and science oversees doc projects regarding religion, history, nature, medicine and science. In addition to slots airing these docs,

37-minute slots are also allocated to three departmental divisions – History and Science, Church and Life (Protestant), and Church and Life (Catholic) – on a rotating basis.

The Sunday night 'Terra X' slot, airing at 7:30 p.m., focuses on ancient history, mythology and scientific experimentation and has expanded to include wildlife. ZDF calls the projects airing on the strand "science thrillers," and they rate well, attracting several million viewers.

A human interest slot, airing Tuesdays at 10:15 p.m., features the strand '37,' which examines themes that reside within the intersection of culture, religion and society. For this slot, 80% of the projects are commissioned, 10% are ZDF in-house productions, and 10% are coproductions or acquisitions.

The Church and Life divisions are behind what ZDF calls "high-gloss documentaries on biblical and archaeological subjects" which tend to air around the holidays.

Of course, there's ZDF/ARTE, the joint venture between ZDF, ARD and French culture channel ARTE. ZDF supplies approximately 1,200 hours per year to ARTE, and 35% of those programs are new productions created as coproductions with ZDF and aired by ARTE. Documentaries represent about 40% of ARTE's total programming. Details on ARTE's programming needs can also be found in the aforementioned brochure.

SATELLITE AND DIGITAL CHANNELS:

Producers should also take note of satellite channel 3sat, a co-venture between German broadcasters ZDF and ARD, Austrian broadcaster ORF and Switzerland's SF which receives approximately 220 hours of doc programming from ZDF per year. About 20% of the docs airing on the channel are coproductions or acquisitions.

Digital channels include ZDFneo, which airs factual entertainment and docs in addition to music, fiction, variety and comedy content; news, documentary and information channel ZDFinfo; and cultural channel ZDFkultur.

HOW TO PITCH:

Here, the commercial arm of the broadcaster, ZDF Enterprises (ZDFE), can be a valuable ally. As a distributor and intermediary between the international market and ZDF, those in its documentary and coproduction department – director Kristina Hollstein and project manager Nikolas Huelbusch – can guide producers to the right contacts within the ZDF family for potential productions, copros or acquisitions.

ZDFE also invests in some copros with ZDF, and looks for international partners for them, and it's also looking for projects to acquire from the international market independently from ZDF.

Check www.zdf-enterprises.de for contact emails.

BW

**CONTACT:**

l.hendel@rai.it

“The documentaries we aim to support are mainly about human stories.”

RAI3 – ITALY**LORENZO HENDEL**

HEAD OF DOC3

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Henkel heads up DOC3, part of RAI3, the channel of Italy's national public broadcaster specifically devoted to news and documentaries. He says its audience is mostly drawn to “interesting, critical and original points of view about society, and about the great issues of the human condition: life and death, health and illness, sexual identity, human relationships, [et cetera].”

“The documentaries we aim to support are mainly about ‘human stories,’ with important and urgent social problems in the background,” he adds. “The stories have to be narrated in a character-driven style, with action more than interviews.” He also says “strong stories with a strong tension” work best for him.

Henkel is looking for one-offs, not series, and DOC3 pays approximately €15,000 (US\$18,445) for a sale, and €25,000 (US\$30,752) for a pre-sale.

HOW TO PITCH:

As the only pitching contact for DOC3, Henkel says, “The rule for me is ‘the more I get, the better it is.’” A demo that focuses on the characters and the story, rather than one that tries to mirror the style of the project, is preferred.

He also wants “some pages to understand and to figure out what the doc will be, [with] details about the style and the approach, details about the access and the relationships [between the] author [and] character.”

However, in those pages, don't spend too much time or energy focusing on the central issue that the doc addresses. “What is important for me is not just the importance of the issue, but the strength of the narration of the story and the strength of the characters,” Henkel maintains. **AB/BW**



RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

The Indestructibles, Weird or What.

RTI SPA MEDIASET – ITALY

DANIELA BAGLIANI

ACQUISITIONS AND COPRODUCTIONS
MANAGER, FACTUAL & DOCUMENTARY
DEPARTMENT

THE BREAKDOWN:

Of RTI's free-to-air channels, three are considered "mainstream," says Bagliani: the family-oriented Canale 5 which specializes in drama and entertainment; Italia 1, which caters to a younger audience; and Retequattro, which is geared towards what Bagliani calls "a more mature and educated audience."

There are also four minor channels that are strongly targeted, including repeat-oriented Mediaset Extra; female-skewing La 5, which airs a number of docureality shows; Italia 2, which caters to a young male audience keen on what Bagliani calls "adrenaline-based content;" and cinema channel Iris.

"For the minor channels we only acquire finished titles, while, on the other end, we can evaluate projects for the primetimes of the major channels," she says.

SLOTS:

Bagliani says primetime slots exist for wildlife and natural history on both Retequattro and Italia 1, a history slot can be found on Retequattro, and Italia 1 has a science/tech slot. "Of course, we are always on the lookout for other possible content that could be appealing for our audience and could help us in developing new slots," she offers.

HOW TO PITCH:

"The best way to propose an idea/project is to send us a proposal which should also include some financial details, the presumed delivery [date] and the partners already on board," she says.

"It would also be highly useful to include an explanation on why the project is relevant to the Italian audience in general and to Mediaset specifically. If the company pitching to us has never worked for us before and there is still no footage to screen of the project, it could really be useful for us to get a screener of a previously delivered title that could exemplify the level of quality and the tools the producer is willing to use in the project he is pitching."

Bagliani also stresses that it's important to remember the market Mediaset serves. "We are a commercial network so we need good ratings; thus anything too niche or high-end is not for us," she says. "We are not even in the position of evaluating social and ethno/anthropological films as they tend to be interesting for too limited an audience. When pitching to us, every indie should think about who the partners or possible partners are, and if the main funding comes from state-owned or niche channels it is highly improbable it could work for us." **BW**

“We are a commercial network; anything too niche is not for us.”



AVRO – THE NETHERLANDS

MARIJKE HUIJBREGTS

COMMISSIONING EDITOR, ARTS

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

The Dutch network's arts documentary strand 'Close Up' is in need of single, 52-minute documentaries that can cover film, design, architecture, photography and contemporary art. Huijbregts cautions that the docs need to be interesting enough for a wide audience, and "not too artistic."

Recent films that AVRO has invested in include *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present*, and films on Jean Paul Goude, Norman Forster, Lang Lang, Oswald Boateng and Michael Nyman.

In addition to having a good story, your doc will need to be nice to look at as well.

"The art has to be shot very beautifully [and it is] important that you can enjoy watching it as though you are standing next to or in front of it," she offers.

AVRO has approximately 250,000 viewers, so Huijbregts needs films suitable for a broad audience.

WHAT SHE'S NOT LOOKING FOR:

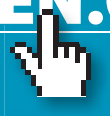
"We don't like re-enactments. And no hosts!"

HOW TO PITCH:

"Send a synopsis, preferably with a trailer, and be clear whether the film is ready or whether you want to coproduce," she advises. **KA**

“We don't like re-enactments. And no hosts!”

FOR MORE
COMMISSIONER
PROFILES, VISIT
REALSCREEN.COM





YESDOCU

GUY LAVIE

CHANNEL HEAD

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"Just as our channel's slogan is 'People – That's the Whole Story,' we're looking for excellent documentary one-offs and series with engaging human stories," says Guy Lavie, head of YesDocu.

The Israeli net is an all-doc channel, broadcasting non-fiction 18 hours a day, including a new film every weekday. "A few times a year we do special theme weeks, such as 'Docu-Fashion,' 'Docu-Chef,' 'DocuNomics,' 'Docu.Com,' and 'Docu-Music,'" Lavie explains.

Examples of local films commissioned for the network's 'Israeli Slot' include the Emmy-winning *Google Baby*, the DOK Leipzig-winning *Life in Stills*, and the Sundance-winning *A Film Unfinished*. Examples of its acquired or pre-bought films include *The Queen of Versailles*, *Ballroom Dancer*, *Woody Allen: A Documentary*, *Searching for Sugar Man*, *Putin's Kiss*, *Whores' Glory*, *Paul Simon: Under African Skies*, *The Cove*, *Donor Unknown* and *Burma VJ*.

"This audience is looking for alternative, intelligent, high-profile, thought-provoking, engaging, well-made television," sums up Lavie.

PITCHING DOS AND DON'TS:

"When pitching I expect to see a clear story, engaging and moving characters, and excellent filmmaking, while dealing with issues that can resonate," Lavie explains. "A trailer or an example of a scene would be essential. The 'don'ts' would be very long treatments and scripts, historic films without a current story, etc."

As for where and when to do the pitching, Lavie and team attend the main pitching forums, "such as IDFA, Hot Docs and Sheffield. At those forums we pick up the majority of our new international projects. For Israeli projects, we have an online submission twice a year."

BUDGETS:

"The average pricing for an international pre-buy would be US\$3,000 an hour," Lavie says. "For locally commissioned projects, the average for an hour is \$70,000. We're looking for an estimated 10 short series a year – around 6 x 45-52 minutes each." **AB**

CONTACT:

Email Lavie at glavie@yes.co.il or acquisition manager Osnat Eden at osnat.eden@yes.co.il.

TARGET DEMO:

While Lavie says its audience is "very eclectic," main age demos are 35-44, and 55 and over.

“I expect to see a clear story, engaging characters and excellent filmmaking.”



BUDGET RANGE

AUD\$400,000 to AUD\$1 million for docs.

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Realscreen Summit, AIDC, Asian Side/Sunny Side of the Doc, History Makers, Sheffield, WCSFP.

“Ninety percent of our schedule is acquisitions; we’re acquisition-heavy.”

SBS

JOHN GODFREY

SENIOR COMMISSIONING EDITOR FOR DOCUMENTARIES

WHAT HE’S LOOKING FOR:

“There are specific genres we are looking to acquire for, and those are science, history and archeology,” says Godfrey. “We have regular slots all year round for those. Human interest stories don’t work for us.”

On the acquisitions front, the broadcaster seeks 90-minute theatrical docs for its ‘Hot Docs’ strand. On the original commissions front, meanwhile, “we only commission about 40 hours a year,” Godfrey explains. “Of those, I’d say about three or four hours are international coproductions, although we really want to do more.”

“Ninety percent of our schedule is acquisitions – we’re acquisition heavy,” he adds. “One thing that I’m looking for in particular, because we’re a multicultural broadcaster, is trying to find synergies with other broadcasters who want to explore global multicultural issues, be it racism or whatever.”

SLOTS:

“A lot of the big history commissions play at 7:30 or 8:30 p.m. on Sunday,” Godfrey says. “Science is at 8:30 on a Sunday, depending on the time of year. Otherwise there’s a history slot at 8:30 p.m. on a Friday where the ‘big picture’ military history documentaries go in.”

“In addition, we’ve started playing a lot of the contemporary social issue documentaries now at 9:30 p.m. on a Tuesday and Wednesday, with some success as well.”

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

“We can only commission Australian production companies, so for international coproduction, the overseas production company would have to form a partnership with the Australian production company,” Godfrey explains. “But the benefit of that is that the Australian production company can bring to the table over AUD\$500,000 per hour from the broadcaster; from the screen agency, Screen Australia; and from the tax break the [Australian] producer offers.”

MONEY MATTERS:

Budgets vary from “around AUD\$400,000 or \$500,000” (US\$420,000 or \$525,000) per hour for single docs to nearly AUD\$1 million at the higher end “depending on what it is – if it involves high end CGI, drama re-enactments, etc,” says Godfrey. “It’s rare now for us to get anything that’s under \$350,000 per hour.” **AB**



A+E NETWORKS ALL ASIA

MICHELE SCHOFIELD

SVP, PROGRAMMING AND MARKETING

THE BREAKDOWN:

Three networks reside under the AETN All Asia umbrella: History, Bio (The Biography Channel) and CI (Crime and Investigation Network). Schofield says third-party acquired programs comprise “around 20-30% depending on our channels. CI and Bio are heavier on third-party acquisitions than History.” Still more content comes from the A+E Networks stable.

Of locally produced series, *Hidden Cities*, in which host Anthony Morse explores some of the lesser-known destinations within Asia, has performed well for History. *Marina Bay Sands 24/7*, a behind the scenes look at the iconic Singapore hotel, was a big hit for Bio, says Schofield. CI, meanwhile, focused on two locally made series over the past year – season two of *Partners in Crime* and *Asia’s Underworld*.

“You can see that our local production focus has shifted from specials to series and we are seeing the rewards of taking those bigger risks in our viewership,” she says.

WHAT SHE’S LOOKING FOR:

Schofield says producers from outside of Asia should note that “our main focus when it comes to contributing to commissions or coproductions is for content to be Asian in some way. We produce content for the purpose of localizing our channels for Asia.” However, “if the project interests us but the topic is more universal, and not so Asian, we may offer to pre-buy the title as an acquisition, instead of coproduce.”

HOW TO PITCH:

For local producers and those pitching potential coproductions, pitches should include a brief outline of the story and style of program, details regarding the access secured (for example, “interviewees or any selling points to the production which are unique to you as the producer”), budget details including any financing already secured, and a rough timeline for delivery. For a finished program to be considered for acquisition, send a story synopsis and preferably a link to screen the content online.

“If we haven’t worked with you before, an introduction to your company, including a web link or reel is very beneficial,” adds Schofield.

SIZZLE TIPS:

“Show us the characters, show us the environment you’ll be shooting in, tell us the story you’re going to tell,” she advises. “We don’t want a glossy trailer that plays more like a promo than a program sizzle.” **BW**

CONTACTS:

Acquisitions: Angie.Yong@aetnallasia.com.
Local productions and copros:
Chris.Humphrey@aetnallasia.com,
Michele.Schofield@aetnallasia.com.

TARGET DEMOS:

For History, the audience is 60% male, ages 25-54.
For Bio and Crime & Investigation (CI), the gender split is fairly equal, both targeting ages 25-54.

“Our local production focus has shifted from specials to series.”



DISCOVERY NETWORKS ASIA-PACIFIC (DNAP)

VIKRAM CHANNA

VICE PRESIDENT, PRODUCTION &
DEVELOPMENT

CONTACTS:

Email Channa directly via vikram_channa@discovery.com, or contact VP of programming Charmaine Kwan at charmaine_kwan@discovery.com. Also be sure to check out the Discovery producer's portal at <http://producers.discovery.com>.

TREATMENT OR TAPE?:

One-pager please, but if there is talent attached, then "a sizzle or a link is a must."

“‘Credible
Insiders,’ as
we like to
call them,
are key.”

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Demographics vary across DNAP's eight networks (Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, TLC, Discovery Science, Discovery HD World, Discovery Turbo, Discovery Home & Health and the recently launched Discovery Kids) but Channa says "our core audience is adults aged 25-54."

For Discovery Channel, Channa says "'survival' in its various forms continues to reinvent and rate. In addition, epic history, both in terms [of] never seen before archives as well as with dramatic re-enactments, has done very well for us recently." Meanwhile, for TLC, "shows on travel and cuisine continue to be a staple." For the new kids net, Channa says "we are on the lookout to develop original kids formats in both the live action and animation space which are both smart and fun." The sweet spot for that network in terms of age is seven to 10.

Across the board with the factual and lifestyle nets, Channa says "talent with specialist skills or points of view" is a vital ingredient in the programming recipe. "'Credible Insiders,' as we like to call them, are key as they conspire to get only the most 'authentic' experiences from diverse spaces for our audiences."

SERIES VOLUMES:

"On Discovery Channel the range of investment can vary," he says. "We tend to produce both one-offs as well as short run series of three to six episodes." As for TLC, again, costs vary, but six- to 13-part series tend to be the typical range.

"For Discovery Kids we are developing original formats and are keen on 13-part series," he adds.

PITCHING DOS AND DON'TS:

Do be sure to visit the producer's portal listed above, and email pitches as well as pitches by appointment are fine.

"Do your homework on the specific needs of the network and get straight to the key selling point of your idea," he says. "Don't cold call via the reception and start pitching your idea immediately after a hurried introduction. Same at conferences and events. Let's set a time and have a good session."

SIZZLE TIPS:

When it comes to crafting a killer sizzle, Channa recommends the following: "Clarity of concept, strong imagery and effective use of talent or key characters." **BW**



FOX INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS

MARK FRANCIS

VICE PRESIDENT, PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW:

Francis joined Fox International Channels (FIC) in fall 2011 after seven years with Discovery, and is primarily focused on helping enable local markets in Asia to set up their own production capabilities.

"I oversee 14 separate territories, of which six or seven will start doing local series this year, and the others will start doing specials or extensions of existing global franchises, like *Megafactories* or some of our flagship strands on Nat Geo," he explains.

"My role is to oversee opportunities for sharing coproduction within the region, but also there are a lot of markets where we don't have EPs and we haven't commissioned original productions, and that's where I'm focused. Markets like Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong... we want to start to connect with our audiences better via local programming."

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Francis says that in the past, Nat Geo would order pan-regional shows for Asia that might only rate highly in five out of 14 territories or so. Now, however, FIC wants more targeted success at a local level in each territory.

As such, Francis advises producers pitching him to "start targeting a certain audience," rather than coming to him with blanket ideas for Asia. For 2013, he will be looking for about 70 original hours of local programming across the region, "which is a big jump up for us," he says.

"Personally, when I commission, there are a lot of boxes to tick, but I put a premium on originality. I'm hoping that I'll find some gem of an idea that is familiar but entirely unique to the culture it's coming from."

Francis adds that with 80% to 90% of content still coming from the U.S. and international Nat Geo channels, "if and when we do decide to do a local production out of Asia, our ratings expectations are much higher – or at least on par with the top U.S. programs that air on NGC."

MONEY MATTERS:

"I'm working on it by local markets right now, so it's a bit difficult to give a solid answer, but we could spend anything from US\$50,000 to \$100,000 to more depending on how much money we raise," says Francis.

"Also, I can offer series. Even with a big international production company, a lot of them would rather have a series even if the per hour budget is lower, because they can plan for their whole year. They can grow their businesses based on that, because I'm after volume." **AB**

LOCATION:

Based in Hong Kong but commissions for FIC channels across Asia.

BUDGETS:

Around US\$50,000 to \$100,000 per hour.

WHAT HE DOESN'T WANT:

"Second-hand copies of formats that already exist."

“When I commission there are a lot of boxes to tick, but I put a premium on originality.”

**KBS****KENNY BAE**SENIOR PRODUCER, INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS DEPARTMENT**TYPE OF PROGRAMMING SOUGHT:**

Hour-long single documentaries.

RIGHTS SOUGHT:

All Korean rights.

WHERE TO FIND HIM:Asian Side of the Doc, Hot Docs, IDFA, MIPTV,
Sheffield Doc/Fest, Sunny Side of the Doc.

“We want
a strong
storyline,
a creative
approach and
something
unique.”

OVERVIEW:

KBS operates three TV channels in South Korea, including international satellite channel KBS World, and serves not only as the country's public broadcaster, but also as its most influential media organization.

It actively seeks documentary coproductions with European and North American partners, which are predominantly overseen by Bae. “I work in the international relations department and I'm in charge of international coproductions, and all the content-related cooperation with international partners,” he explains.

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Bae is only focused on single docs, since “series are somewhat difficult and most of our documentary slots are one hour.”

For KBS, he is involved in both coproductions and acquisitions, with the former accounting for about 10%-15% of his annual spend (amounting to about five to seven docs) and the rest going towards finished titles.

“We are a very general interest network,” he explains. “We want titles that have a strong storyline, a creative approach, and something unique. If it's also relevant for a Korean audience, that would be preferable.”

TIPS FOR PRODUCERS:

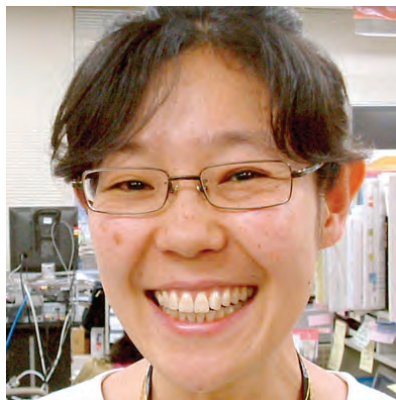
“The timing of delivery and the relevance for a Korean audience is very important,” says Bae. “A couple of years ago I was pitched a film about Chernobyl, and at the time I thought we weren't really interested in it.

“But after the disaster in Japan, I looked frantically for the business card and contact info, and then we acquired it.” He adds that the broadcaster also has “some general interest in wildlife and current affairs” titles.

THE BEST WAY TO PITCH HIM:

Email him directly at baepd@kbs.co.kr. “KBS is very keen to work with international partners, so send me an email with your proposal,” he says, adding that clips and trailers are definitely a plus.

“If it's finished, send us a DVD, and if it's in the development stages, provide a link or a trailer – it will be helpful in understanding the project.” **AB**



NHK (JAPAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION)

TOMOKO OKUTSU

SENIOR PRODUCER, INTERNATIONAL ACQUISITION

PRIME DOC SLOTS:

'World Documentary,' a 49-min slot airing Monday-Thursday on NHK's Satellite 1 channel; and 'Dramatic Planet,' a weekly, 44-min slot on the terrestrial channel NHK Educational TV.

CONTACTS:

Takaaki Takai (takai.t-fw@nhk.or.jp), Tomoko Okutsu (okutsu.t-ii@nhk.or.jp) for 'World Documentary'; Akira Yoshizawa (yoshizawa.a-fs@nhk.or.jp), Wakako Nagano (nagano.w-iw@nhk.or.jp) for 'Dramatic Planet.'

“Science, natural history, modern history, geo-politics and civilization work for coproduction.”

WHAT THEY WANT:

Okutsu highlights two prime slots for acquisitions of international productions – 'World Documentary' and 'Dramatic Planet.' For the former, programmers are looking to commission and acquire a wide spectrum of current affairs docs, ranging from social and political documentaries, to films focusing on the economy, ecology or modern history. Projects dealing with human interest stories, the arts, music or technology are also acceptable, "provided that the subject of the film has social and/or global dimensions," she says.

Yearly, this strand acquires close to 90 films from abroad, and for the slot, NHK coproduces some 15 programs with foreign broadcasters and prodcos. Recent productions airing here include *Armadillo* (Fridthjof Film), *The Day that Changed the World* (a copro from Brook Lapping Productions and NHK), and *NTR – Nuclear, Nothing to Report* (ARTE France, Crescendo Films).

Okutsu says currently, the following topics are in demand for 'World Documentary' – alternative energy and the future of energy technology; social issues related to the economic crisis in Europe; ecology; and emerging societies within Asia, Latin America and Africa.

"For coproduction with NHK in general, any topic is worth looking into," she adds. "But from our past experience, we find that science, natural history, modern history, geo-politics and civilization especially work well for coproduction."

'Dramatic Planet' airs "entertaining documentaries that are fit for family viewing like ancient history, culture, science, space, adventure, [or] wildlife," says Okutsu. She adds that many of the 40 programs bought for the slot over the course of a year highlight advances in camera technology, and "allow us to see what the human eye could not see before. Be it the world of space, nature, history, we are seeing many documentaries that reveal new truths by visually entertaining us at the same time." Recent films in this slot include *Dogs that Changed the World* (Thirteen/WNET New York, Tigress Productions), and *Planet Dinosaur* (Darlow Smithson Productions).

HOW TO PITCH:

For 'World Documentary,' if you're interested in coproducing with NHK, send a synopsis or treatment of the project, production schedule, names of other main partners and clips or rough cuts. For acquisitions, send a synopsis and screener.

For 'Dramatic Planet,' you will need to send a full-length screener. **BW**



THE BRITDOC FOUNDATION

JESS SEARCH

CEO

TYPES OF FUNDS:

The Britdoc Foundation encompasses four main funds: The Bertha Britdoc Connect fund, the Puma.Creative Catalyst Award, the Channel 4 Britdoc Fund and the Bertha Britdoc Journalism Fund. The foundation also co-organizes the Good Pitch with the Sundance Institute, which brings filmmakers together with NGOs, foundations, philanthropists and brands.

The Bertha Britdoc Connect fund is a European-based fund for outreach and engagement, which helps documentaries “continue to inspire and change the world.” The fund has supported eight docs so far, including *Gasland*, *Give up Tomorrow* and *Call Me Kuchu*.

Meanwhile, the Bertha Britdoc Journalism Fund is for long-form investigative filmmaking, and has supported docs including Fredrik Gertten’s *Big Boys Gone Bananas!* and Jehane Noujaim’s *The Square*.

“Our development fund, the Puma.Creative Catalyst Award, is now in its second year,” adds Search. “We can award both established and emerging filmmakers. So far we’ve seen some great projects come to completion after receiving early stages funding from this award, such as *Dragonslayer*, *Ping Pong* and *One Mile Away*.”

Finally, the Channel 4 fund is for British- or British-based filmmakers, and supports a range of films from development to completion. Among the supported titles are Andrew Kotting’s *Swadown* and Jerry Rothwell’s *Town of Runners*.

“All our funds are available to international filmmakers other than the Channel 4 Fund,” says Search.

MONEY MATTERS:

Britdoc gives out 20 Puma.Creative Catalyst Awards of €5,000 (US\$6,140) per year, while Bertha Britdoc Connect fund grants range from £5,000 to £50,000 (US\$7,840 to \$78,400). In the first round of 2012, the Bertha fund gave out eight grants.

“The Bertha Britdoc Journalism fund is a rolling fund, thus we’re able to support urgent projects throughout the year that follow events as they unfold,” says Search. “The Channel 4 Britdoc Fund offers in the region of £20,000 to £50,000 per project.”

TAKE NOTE:

“Our funding is not a replacement for broadcast funds,” says Search. “If we think your project could get financed via the broadcast route then we’ll let you know. Our main aim is to see that strong films get made, so if your film isn’t right for TV then we’re here to help out.”

Interested filmmakers should check out previously supported projects at britdoc.org/real_films.

AB

FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Four, with cycles throughout the year.

MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT:

£50,000 (US\$78,400)

PAST RECIPIENTS:

Call Me Kuchu, *Dragonslayer* and *Gasland*.

“Our main aim is to see that strong films get made.”



CINEREACH

ADELLA LADJEVARDI

GRANTS MANAGER

WHERE TO APPLY:

cinereach.org/grants/how-to-apply1

CASH AVAILABLE:

US\$5,000 to \$50,000 per project.

WHAT IT SUPPORTS:

Cinereach awards grants to feature-length non-fiction and fiction films that are "at the intersection of engaging storytelling, visual artistry, and vital subject matter," the organization says.

Grants range from US\$5,000 to \$50,000 per project and can be awarded to support any stage of production, including development, production and post.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Applicants often have the mistaken impression that Cinereach is seeking to support only "social issue films," says Ladjevardi. "I would encourage prospective applicants to look at a wide sampling of our past grant recipients."

The first step in being considered for a Cinereach grant is to submit an online letter of inquiry during one of its open call grant cycles. Deadlines vary from cycle to cycle, so interested filmmakers should join the email list at Cinereach.org to be among the first to be notified of forthcoming open calls. **AB**

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE DOCUMENTARY FILM PROGRAM AND FUND

FUNDING CYCLES:

Deadlines are twice a year, in February and July.

CASH AVAILABLE:

More than US\$1.2 million for up to 40 feature docs per year.

CONTACTS:

Email dfp@sundance.org; info online at www.sundance.org/programs/documentary-fund.

WHAT IT BACKS:

The Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program and Fund (DFP) supports independent, feature-length docs with contemporary-issue themes. Ideal projects are "cinematic or feature strong storytelling, global relevance, and originality," according to the DFP.

Supported projects include *Bully*, *The Invisible War*, *The Island President*, *Gasland*, *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry*, *The Queen of Versailles*, *Planet of Snail* and *The Interrupters*.

GRANTS AVAILABLE:

The DFP reviews 1,700 to 2,000 proposals annually, supporting between 45-55 projects each year. Grant awards provide partial funding and are not recoupable.

Funding is available in four categories: development (submit up to 20 minutes of edited tape, US\$10,000-\$20,000 available); production/post-production (submit up to full rough cut, \$20,000-\$50,000); audience engagement (prior grantees only, up to \$20,000); and discretionary (up to \$15,000).

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

Deadlines are February and July annually, and funding decisions take five to six months from the deadline date. In addition to funding, grantees are eligible for year-round creative support. Applications require a written proposal and budget top sheet, as well as edited sample footage. Ideally projects should have secured access, a developed story idea, and a sample tape prior to submission.

WHERE TO FIND THEM:

Representatives generally attend IDFA Forum, Hot Docs Forum, IFF Week, Sheffield Doc/Fest MeetMarket, and the Good Pitch events. Additional representation is often at DocEdge India, Latin Side of The Doc, Durban Film Market, Greenhouse Forum and Jihlava Doc Forum. **AB**



FUNDING CYCLES:

Two per year.

CASH AVAILABLE:

More than US\$1.2 million for up to 40 feature docs per year.

CONTACTS:

documentary@tribecafilminstitute.org,
newmediafund@tribecafilminstitute.org,
+1-212-274-8080 ext. 28 or ext. 26.

“The TFI aims to support creatively authored original stories.”

THE TRIBECA FILM INSTITUTE

RYAN HARRINGTON

DIRECTOR OF DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMMING

WHAT IT SUPPORTS:

The Tribeca Film Institute (TFI) is a year-round non-profit arts organization founded by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal and Craig Hatkoff in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks to help revitalize New York City and Lower Manhattan.

The TFI provides funding and guidance to support filmmakers through a number of distinctive programming areas: Tribeca All Access promotes the careers of filmmakers from diverse backgrounds through professional guidance and grants; the TFI Documentary Fund, which houses the new TFI/ESPN Prize, funds and furthers the development of character-driven documentaries; and the Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund provides grants to feature-length documentaries which highlight and humanize issues of social importance.

In addition, the TFI Latin America Media Arts Fund provides grants to innovative documentary filmmakers working in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America; the Heineken VOCES Grant supports Latino American filmmakers; and the TFI New Media Fund provides grants and launches exceptional cross-platform media projects that address social issues and stories of inequality.

THE AMOUNT IT GIVES:

The organization funds up to 40 feature documentaries and four to eight cross-platform/interactive projects annually, with grants ranging from US\$10,000 to \$100,000, equaling more than \$1.2 million annually.

TAKE NOTE:

“The TFI is a filmmaker-focused organization that aims to support creatively authored original stories, driven by thoughtful and in-depth storytelling and bolstered by a compelling visual approach, with engaging characters and unique access,” says Harrington.

“Funded documentary films must have a dedication to craft, contemporary resonance, be able to exist on multiple distribution platforms and resonate with an audience.”

For new media, the organization is looking for projects “that activate audiences around issues of contemporary social justice and equality around the world, and demonstrate the power of cross-platform storytelling and dynamic audience engagement,” he adds.

DEADLINES:

The TFI has two funding cycles per year: September 5 to November 5, and December 5 to February 5. Further information is available at tribecafilminstitute.org.

AB

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